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Alfred, Lord Tennyson

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THE POETIC AND DRAMATIC WORKS OF ALFRED LORD TENNYSON

Household Edition

WITH ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SEVEN
ILLUSTRATIONS



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE

A *Household Edition* of Tennyson's Poems was published by the predecessors of the present publishers in 1871, and advantage was at that time taken of Moxon's English edition with illustrations by artists, mainly of the Pre-raphaelite school, to include a number of these designs; to these were added designs by American artists who worked in much the same spirit. But that edition comprised somewhat less than half the present number of Tennyson's poems, and from time to time, as successive volumes of poems were republished by arrangement with the English publishers, their contents were added to the *Household Edition* and accompanied by new designs by English and American artists.

The recent issue by the publishers of the *Cambridge Edition* of Tennyson's poetic and dramatic works, in which the text was very carefully determined, has induced them to reissue the *Household Edition* on practically the same lines as the original edition, but with entirely new plates of larger type, and with such a revision of the illustrations as was possible under the improved conditions. The text is that of the *Cambridge Edition*, scrupulously followed. A brief biographic sketch has been provided, and suitable indexes have been furnished. The illustrations have been selected with great care from the best designs made to accompany the poems by English, American, and French artists, and have been reinforced also by portraits and representations of historic buildings. In repeating the important series by Millais, Rossetti, La Farge, Vedder, and others, recourse has been had to early impressions, and sometimes to the original blocks, to secure clearness of line and freshness of color. The total number of illustrations has been largely increased, and the result is the most thoroughly illustrated Tennyson thus far offered to the public.

The large body of Tennyson's poetic and dramatic works, when thus increased in bulk by so many illustrations, makes the problem of producing an agreeable single volume very difficult; but by the choice of a compact page, the use of a thin opaque paper, and great care in printing, the publishers trust they have at least come near the solution of the problem.

BOSTON: *Autumn*, 1899.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH	xvii
TO THE QUEEN	1
JUVENILIA.	
CLARIBEL	3
NOTHING WILL DIE	4
ALL THINGS WILL DIE	4
LEONINE ELEGIACS	4
SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND	5
THE KRAKEN	7
SONG: 'THE WINDS, AS AT THEIR HOUR OF BIRTH'	7
LILIAN	7
ISABEL	8
MARIANA	8
TO —	10
MADELINE	10
SONG: THE OWL	11
SECOND SONG, TO THE SAME	11
RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS	11
ODE TO MEMORY	14
SONG: 'A SPIRIT HAUNTS THE YEAR'S LAST HOURS'	16
A CHARACTER	16
THE POET	17
THE POET'S MIND	18
THE SEA-FAIRIES	18
THE DESERTED HOUSE	19
THE DYING SWAN	20
A DIRGE	20
LOVE AND DEATH	21
THE BALLAD OF ORIANA	21
CIRCUMSTANCE	23
THE MERMAN	23
THE MERMAID	24
ADELINE	24
MARGARET	26
ROSALIND	26
ELEANORE	27
KATE	29
✓MY LIFE IS FULL OF WEARY DAYS'	29
EARLY SONNETS.	
I. TO —	29
II. TO J. M. K.	30
III. 'MINE BE THE STRENGTH OF SPIRIT, FULL AND FREE'	30
IV. ALEXANDER	30
✓V. BUONAPARTE	30
✓VI. POLAND	31
VII. 'CARESS'D OR CHIDDEN BY THE SLENDER HAND'	31

	PAGE
VIII. 'THE FORM, THE FORM ALONE IS ELOQUENT'	31
IX. 'WAN SCULPTOR, WEEPEST THOU TO TAKE THE CAST'	31
X. 'IF I WERE LOVED, AS I DESIRE TO BE'	32
XI. THE BRIDESMAID	32
THE LADY OF SHALOTT, AND OTHER POEMS.	
✓THE LADY OF SHALOTT	33
MARIANA IN THE SOUTH	35
THE TWO VOICES	37
✓THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER	44
✓FATIMA	47
✓ENONE	48
THE SISTERS	53
TO —	54
THE PALACE OF ART	54
LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE	60
THE MAY QUEEN	61
NEW-YEAR'S EVE	62
CONCLUSION	64
✓THE LOTOS-EATERS	65
✓CHORIC SONG	66
A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN	69
THE BLACKBIRD	75
THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR	76
TO J. S.	77
ON A MOURNER	78
'YOU ASK ME, WHY, THO' ILL AT EASE'	79
'OF OLD SAT FREEDOM ON THE HEIGHTS'	79
'LOVE THOU THY LAND, WITH LOVE FAR-BROUGHT'	79
ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN 1782	81
THE GOOSE	81
ENGLISH IDYLS, AND OTHER POEMS.	
THE EPIC	83
MORTE D'ARTHUR	84
THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER	90
DORA	95
AUDLEY COURT	99
WALKING TO THE MAIL	100
EDWIN MORRIS	102
SAINT SIMEON STYLITES	105
THE TALKING OAK	109
LOVE AND DUTY	114
THE GOLDEN YEAR	115
ULYSSES	117
TITHONUS	118
LOCKSLEY HALL	120

GODIVA	126	NORTHERN FARMER; OLD STYLE	337
THE DAY-DREAM.		NORTHERN FARMER; NEW STYLE	339
PROLOGUE	128	IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTERETZ	340
THE SLEEPING PALACE	128	THE FLOWER	340
THE SLEEPING BEAUTY	130	REQUIESCAT	341
THE ARRIVAL	130	THE SAILOR BOY	341
THE REVIVAL	131	THE ISLET	342
THE DEPARTURE	132	A DEDICATION	342
MORAL	132	EXPERIMENTS.	
L'ENVOI	132	BOADICEA	342
EPILOGUE	133	IN QUANTITY.	
AMPHION	133	ON TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER	344
SAINT AGNES' EVE	134	MILTON	344
EDWARD GRAY	135	'O YOU CHORUS OF INDOLENT	
SIR GALAHAD	136	REVIEWERS'	345
WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL		SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION	
MONOLOGUE	137	OF THE ILIAD IN BLANK	
LADY CLARE	141	VERSE	345
THE CAPTAIN	142	THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY, 1852	345
THE LORD OF BURLEIGH	143	A WELCOME TO HER ROYAL HIGH-	
THE VOYAGE	144	NES MARIE ALEXANDROVNA,	
SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN GUIN-		DUCHESS OF EDINBURGH	346
EVERE	146	IN THE GARDEN AT SWAINSTON	347
A FAREWELL	146	CHILD SONGS.	
THE EAGLE	146	I. THE CITY 'CHILD	347
'MOVE EASTWARD, HAPPY EARTH'	146	II. MINNIE AND WINNIE	348
THE BEGGAR MAID	147	THE SPITEFUL LETTER	348
'COME NOT, WHEN I AM DEAD'	147	LITERARY SQUABBLERS	348
THE LETTERS	148	THE VICTIM	348
THE VISION OF SIN	148	WAGES	349
TO —, AFTER READING A LIFE		THE HIGHER PANTHEISM	350
AND LETTERS	151	THE VOICE AND THE PEAK	350
TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN		'FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED WALL'	351
GREECE	153	LUCRETIVS	351
'BREAK, BREAK, BREAK'	153	THE WINDOW; OR, THE SONG	
THE POET'S SONG	153	OF THE WRENS.	
THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY.		THE WINDOW.	
PROLOGUE	154	ON THE HILL	357
THE PRINCESS	158	AT THE WINDOW	358
INTERLUDE	189	GONE	358
CONCLUSION	213	WINTER	358
IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.	217	SPRING	358
MAUD, AND OTHER POEMS.		THE LETTER	358
MAUD; A MONODRAMA	260	NO ANSWER	359
THE BROOK	281	NO ANSWER	359
THE DAISY	286	THE ANSWER	359
TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE	287	AY	359
WILL	288	WHEN	359
ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE		MARRIAGE MORNING	360
OF WELLINGTON	288	THE LOVER'S TALE	361
THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRI-		THE GOLDEN SUPPER	380
GADE	292	IDYLLS OF THE KING.	
ENOCH ARDEN, AND OTHER		DEDICATION	387
POEMS.		THE COMING OF ARTHUR	388
ENOCH ARDEN	293	THE ROUND TABLE.	
AYLMER'S FIELD	312	GARETH AND LYNETTE	398
SEA DREAMS	327	THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT	423
ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING OF THE		GERAINT AND ENID	439
INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION	333	BALIN AND BALAN	457
A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA	334	MERLIN AND VIVIEN	468
THE GRANDMOTHER	334	LANCELOT AND ELAINE	487

TABLE OF CONTENTS

vii

THE HOLY GRAIL	513	EPITAPH ON GENERAL GORDON	646
PELLEAS AND ETARRE	529	EPITAPH ON CAXTON	646
THE LAST TOURNAMENT	540	TO THE DUKE OF ARGYLL	646
GUINEVERE	553	HANDS ALL ROUND	646
THE PASSING OF ARTHUR	567	FREEDOM	647
TO THE QUEEN	575	POETS AND THEIR BIBLIOGRAPHIES	648
BALLADS, AND OTHER POEMS.		TO H. R. H. PRINCESS BEATRICE	
TO ALFRED TENNYSON, MY GRAND-SON	577	LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER, ETC.	
THE FIRST QUARREL	577	LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER	
RIZPAH	579	THE FLEET	
THE NORTHERN COBBLER	582	OPENING OF THE INDIAN AND COLONIAL EXHIBITION BY THE QUEEN	
THE REVENGE	584	TO W. C. MACREADY	
THE SISTERS	586	DEMETER, AND OTHER POEMS.	
THE VILLAGE WIFE	592	TO THE MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA	
IN THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL	595	ON THE JUBILEE OF QUEEN VICTORIA	
DEDICATORY POEM TO THE PRINCESS ALICE	596	TO PROFESSOR JERR	
THE DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW	597	DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE	
SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD COHAM	599	OWD ROA	
COLUMBUS	603	VASTNESS	
THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE	607	THE RING	
DE PROFUNDIS.		FORLORN	
THE TWO GREETINGS	610	HAPPY	
THE HUMAN CRY	611	TO ULYSSES	
SONNETS.		TO MARY BOYLE	
PREFATORY SONNET	611	THE PROGRESS OF SPRING	
TO THE REV. W. H. BROOKFIELD	611	MERLIN AND THE GLEAM	
MONTENEGRO	612	ROMNEY'S REMORSE	
TO VICTOR HUGO	612	PARNASSUS	
TRANSLATIONS, ETC.		BY AN EVOLUTIONIST	
BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH	613	OLD AGE	
ACHILLES OVER THE TRENCH	614	FAR—FAR—AWAY	
TO PRINCESS FREDERICA ON HER MARRIAGE	616	POLITICS	
SIR JOHN FRANKLIN	616	BEAUTIFUL CITY	
TO DANTE	616	THE ROSES ON THE TERRACE	
TIRESIAS, AND OTHER POEMS.		THE PLAY	
TO E. FITZGERALD	617	ON ONE WHO AFFECTED AN EFFEMINATE MANNER	
TIRESIAS	618	TO ONE WHO RAN DOWN THE ENGLISH	
THE WRECK	621	THE SNOWDROP	
DESPAIR	624	THE THROSTLE	
THE ANCIENT SAGE	628	THE OAK	
THE FLIGHT	632	IN MEMORIAM W. G. WARD	
TO-MORROW	634	QUEEN MARY: A DRAMA	
THE SPINSTER'S SWEET-ARTS	637	HAROLD: A DRAMA.	
THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE AT BALACLAVA.		SHOW-DAY AT BATTLE ABBEY, 1876	
PROLOGUE: TO GENERAL HAMELEY	639	HAROLD	
THE CHARGE	640	BECKET	
EPILOGUE	641	THE FALCON	
TO VIRGIL	642	THE CUP	
THE DEAD PROPHET	643	THE PROMISE OF MAY	
EARLY SPRING	644		
PREFATORY POEM TO MY BROTHER'S SONNETS	645		
'FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE'	645		
HELEN'S TOWER	646		
EPITAPH ON LORD STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE	646		

CROSSING THE BAR . . . 924

ADDITIONAL POEMS.

TIMBUCTOO	925
THE 'HOW' AND THE 'WHY'	929
THE BURIAL OF LOVE	929
To —	930
SONG: 'I' THE GLOOMING LIGHT'	930
SONG: 'THE LINTWHITE AND THE THROSTLECOCK'	930
SONG: 'EVERY DAY HATH ITS NIGHT'	931
HERO TO LEANDER	931
THE MYSTIC	932
THE GRASSHOPPER	932
LOVE, PRIDE, AND FORGETFUL- NESS	933
CHORUS	933
LOST HOPE	933
THE TEARS OF HEAVEN	934
LOVE AND SORROW	934
TO A LADY SLEEPING	934
SONNET: 'COULD I OUTWEAR MY PRESENT STATE OF WOE'	934
SONNET: 'THOUGH NIGHT HATH CLIMBED HER PEAK OF HIGH- EST NOON'	935
SONNET: 'SHALL THE HAG EVIL DIE WITH CHILD OF GOOD'	935
SONNET: 'THE PALLID THUNDER- STRICKEN SIGH FOR GAIN'	935
LOVE	935
ENGLISH WAR-SONG	936
NATIONAL SONG	937
DUALISMS	937
THE SEA FAIRIES	937
<i>Oi p'ortes</i>	938
SONNET: 'O BEAUTY, PASSING BEAUTY! SWEETEST SWEET!'	939
THE HESPERIDES	939
ROSALIND	940

SONG: 'WHO CAN SAY' . . . 941

SONNET, WRITTEN ON HEARING OF THE OUTBREAK OF THE POLISH INSURRECTION	941
O DARLING ROOM	941
TO CHRISTOPHER NORTH	941
ON CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY	942
NO MORE	942
ANACREONTICS	942
A FRAGMENT	942
SONNET: 'ME MY OWN FATE TO LASTING SORROW DOOMETH'	943
SONNET: 'CHECK EVERY OUT- FLASH, EVERY RUDER SALLY'	943
SONNET: 'THERE ARE THREE THINGS WHICH FILL MY HEART WITH SIGHS'	943
THE SKIPPING-ROPE	943
THE NEW TIMON AND THE POETS	944
Lines, CONTRIBUTED TO 'THE MANCHESTER ATHENÆUM'	944
STANZAS, CONTRIBUTED TO 'THE KEEPSAKE'	944
BRITONS, GUARD YOUR OWN	945
ADDITIONAL VERSES TO 'GOD SAVE THE QUEEN'	946
THE WAR	946
THE RINGLET	946
Lines: LONG AS THE HEART BEATS LIFE WITHIN HER BREAST	947
1865-1866	947
STANZA, CONTRIBUTED TO THE 'SHAKESPEAREAN SHOW- BOOK'	947
COMPROMISE	947
EXPERIMENT IN SAPPIC METRE	948
STANZA, CONTRIBUTED TO 'PEARL'	948

INDEX OF FIRST LINES . . . 951

INDEX OF TITLES . . . 957

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (Photogravure) *Frontispiece*
From an amateur photograph, about 1855, in the
Lenox Library

JUVENILIA

	ARTIST	PAGE
CLARIBEL		
'Where Claribel low-lieth The breezes pause and die'	<i>T. Creswick, R. A.</i>	3
MARIANA		
'Her tears fell with the dews at even; Her tears fell ere the dews were dried'	<i>J. E. Millais, A. R. A.</i>	9
RECOLLECTIONS OF THE ARABIAN NIGHTS		
'For it was in the golden prime Of good Haroun Alraschid'	<i>W. H. Hunt</i>	13
ODE TO MEMORY		
'To . . . dimple in the dark of rushy coves	<i>T. Creswick, R. A.</i>	14
THE DESERTED HOUSE		
'Life and Thought have gone away Side by side'	<i>W. Mulready, R. A.</i>	19
THE BALLAD OF ORIANA		
'I to thee my troth did plight, Oriana'	<i>W. H. Hunt</i>	22
ADELINE		
'The low-tongued Orient'	<i>J. D. Smillie</i>	25

THE LADY OF SHALOTT, AND OTHER POEMS

THE LADY OF SHALOTT		
'"The curse is come upon me," cried The Lady of Shalott'	<i>W. H. Hunt</i>	33
MARIANA IN THE SOUTH		
'Low on her knees herself she cast, Before Our Lady'	<i>D. G. Rossetti</i>	36
THE TWO VOICES		
'I wondered, while I paced along; The woods were fill'd so full with song	<i>Thomas Moran</i>	43
THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER		
'And rose, and, with a silent grace Approaching, press'd you heart to heart'	<i>J. E. Millais, A. R. A.</i>	46
CENONE		
'Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel'	<i>C. Stanfield, R. A.</i>	49
THE SISTERS		
'The wind is blowing in turret and tree'	<i>J. E. Millais, A. R. A.</i>	53
THE PALACE OF ART		
'In a clear-wall'd city on the sea, Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair Wound with white roses, slept Saint Cecily'	<i>D. G. Rossetti</i>	56
'Mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son'	<i>D. G. Rossetti</i>	57

THE MAY QUEEN		
' It is the last New-year that I shall ever see '	<i>J. C. Horsley, A. R. A.</i>	62
' I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed '	<i>J. C. Horsley, A. R. A.</i>	65
THE LOTOS-EATERS		
' O, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more '	<i>C. Stanfield, R. A.</i>	67
A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN		
' Dislodging pinnacle and parapet '	<i>W. L. Sheppard</i>	71
' Kneeling, with one arm about her king, Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath '	<i>J. E. Millais, A. R. A.</i>	73
THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR		
' Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow '	<i>J. E. Millais, A. R. A.</i>	76
THE GOOSE		
' Quoth she, " The devil take the goose, And God forget the stranger "'	<i>W. Mulready, R. A.</i>	81
ENGLISH IDYLS AND OTHER POEMS		
MORTE D'ARTHUR		
' An arm Rose up from out the bosom of the lake, Clothed in white samite '	<i>D. MacIise, R. A.</i>	83
' And call'd him by his name, complaining loud, And dropping bitter tears against his brow Striped with dark blood '	<i>D. MacIise, R. A.</i>	89
THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER		
' The gray cathedral towers, Across a hazy glimmer of the west '	<i>W. P. Snyder</i>	94
DORA		
' I have been to blame — to blame. I have kill'd my son, I have kill'd him — but I loved him — my dear son '	<i>J. E. Millais, A. R. A.</i>	98
EDWIN MORRIS		
' When men knew how to build, upon a rock With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock '	<i>C. Stanfield, R. A.</i>	103
THE TALKING OAK		
' And I have shadow'd many a group Of beauties that were born In teacup-times of hood and hoop, Or while the patch was worn '	<i>J. E. Millais, A. R. A.</i>	110
' She, Dryad-like, shall wear Alternate leaf and acorn-ball '	<i>J. E. Millais, A. R. A.</i>	113
ULYSSES		
' There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail; There gloom the dark, broad seas "'	<i>C. Stanfield, R. A.</i>	117
LOCKSLEY HALL		
' Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn '	<i>W. J. Hennessy</i>	121
' Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships '	<i>W. J. Hennessy</i>	123
' Baby lips will laugh me down; my latest rival brings thee rest. Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast '	<i>W. J. Hennessy</i>	125

GODIVA		
'Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her belt'	<i>W. H. Hunt</i>	127
THE DAY-DREAM		
'The page has caught her hand in his ; Her lips are sever'd as to speak'	<i>J. E. Millais, A. R. A.</i>	129
'"How say you ? we have slept, my lords, My beard has grown into my lap"'	<i>J. E. Millais, A. R. A.</i>	131
SAINT AGNES' EVE		
'My breath to heaven like vapor goes; May my soul follow soon'	<i>J. E. Millais, A. R. A.</i>	135
SIR GALAHAD		
'Then by some secret shrine I ride; I hear a voice, but none are there'	<i>D. G. Rossetti</i>	137
WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE		
'But whither would my fancy go ? How out of place she makes The violet of a legend blow Among the chops and steaks'	<i>W. Mulready, R. A.</i>	139
THE LORD OF BURLEIGH		
'"Bring the dress and put it on her, That she wore when she was wed"'	<i>J. E. Millais, A. R. A.</i>	143
THE BEGGAR MAID		
'In robe and crown the king stepped down, To meet and greet her on her way'	<i>W. H. Hunt</i>	147
'BREAK, BREAK, BREAK'		
'Break, break, break, At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!'	<i>C. Stanfield, R. A.</i>	152
THE PRINCESS : A MEDLEY		
'The Abbey-ruin in the park'	<i>F. B. Schell</i>	154
'Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve'	<i>Edmund H. Garrett</i>	161
'The Lady Blanche's daughter where she stood, Melissa, with her hand upon the lock'	<i>Frederick Dielman</i>	169
'Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought He scarce would prosper'	<i>Frederick Dielman</i>	173
'The splendor falls on castle walls And snowy summits old in story'	<i>S. Colman</i>	177
'They to and fro Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some pale'	<i>Frederick Dielman</i>	187
'All her fair length upon the ground she lay ; And at her head a follower of the camp'	<i>Frederick Dielman</i>	191
'Like summer tempest came her tears — "Sweet my child, I live for thee"'	<i>Sol Eytinge, Jr.</i>	199
'Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot, And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close enough'	<i>Frederick Dielman</i>	203
'I shall die to-night. Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die"'	<i>A. Fredericks</i>	209

‘ “A dream That once was mine ! what woman taught you this ? ” ’	<i>Frederick Dielman</i>	213
‘ “ You — tell us what we are ” ’	<i>A. B. Frost</i>	215
IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.		
Arthur Henry Hallam		217
<i>From a painting exhibited at South Kensington, 1867, owned by Colonel Farnaby Lennard</i>		
‘ Fair ship, that from the Italian shore Sailed the placid ocean-plains ’	<i>Birket Foster</i>	221
‘ They laid him by the pleasant shore, And in the hearing of the wave ’		225
<i>From a photograph</i>		
‘ Streams that swift or slow Draw down Æonian hills ’	<i>Edmund H. Garrett</i>	229
‘ I found a wood with thorny boughs ’	<i>Birket Foster</i>	237
‘ Thro’ all the dewy tassell’d wood ’	<i>J. A. Brown</i>	243
‘ You will see the Rhine, And those fair hills I sail’d below ’	<i>H. Bolton Jones</i>	249
‘ There rolls the deep ’	<i>Edmund H. Garrett</i>	255
MAUD AND OTHER POEMS		
MAUD; A MONODRAMA		
‘ I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood ’	<i>G. Perkins</i>	260
‘ She came to the village church, And sat by a pillar alone ’	<i>Sol Eytinge, Jr.</i>	267
‘ Come into the garden, Maud ’	<i>Birket Foster</i>	275
THE BROOK		
‘ I come from haunts of coot and hern, I make a sudden sally And sparkle out among the fern ’	<i>Charles Copeland</i>	283
‘ I steal by lawns and grassy plots, I slide by hazel covers ’	<i>W. H. Richards</i>	285
ENOCH ARDEN AND OTHER POEMS		
ENOCH ARDEN		
‘ Beating it in upon his weary brain, As tho’ it were the burthen of a song, “ Not to tell her, never to let her know ” ’	<i>J. LaFarge</i>	293
‘ He thrice had pluck’d a life From the dread sweep of the down-streaming seas ’	<i>Elihu Vedder</i>	295
‘ Forward she started with a happy cry, And laid the feeble infant in his arms ’	<i>W. J. Hennessy</i>	297
‘ Then Philip put the boy and girl to school, And bought them needful books ’	<i>F. O. C. Darley</i>	301
‘ Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke : “ Annie, there is a thing upon my mind ” ’	<i>J. LaFarge</i>	303
‘ A shipwreck’d sailor, waiting for a sail ’	<i>J. LaFarge</i>	306
‘ “ Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness A little longer ! aid me, give me strength ” ’	<i>J. LaFarge</i>	311
AYLMER’S FIELD		
Aylmer Hall	<i>Edmund H. Garrett</i>	319

SEA DREAMS			
	“I dream’d Of such a tide swelling toward the land”	<i>J. D. Woodward</i>	329
THE GRANDMOTHER			
	‘Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago’	<i>J. E. Millais, A. R. A.</i>	335
THE SAILOR BOY			
	‘God help me ! save I take my part Of danger on the roaring sea”	<i>Edmund H. Garrett</i>	341
THE VOICE AND THE PEAK			
	‘Hast thou no voice, O Peak’	<i>F. B. Schell</i>	351
THE WINDOW; OR THE SONG OF THE WRENS			
	‘The home of my love’	<i>W. St. J. Harper</i>	357
THE LOVER’S TALE			
	‘She was dark-hair’d, dark-eyed’	<i>W. St. J. Harper</i>	361
	‘Lower down Spreads out a little lake’	<i>E. W. Longfellow</i>	371
	‘In the heart of the great forest’	<i>G. Perkins</i>	375
IDYLLS OF THE KING			
DEDICATION			
	Prince Albert <i>From a photograph</i>		387
THE COMING OF ARTHUR			
	‘“A naked babe, and rode to Merlin’s feet”’	<i>Gustave Doré</i>	395
THE ROUND TABLE			
THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT			
	‘And high above a piece of turret stair, Worn by the feet that now were silent, wound Bare to the sun’	<i>Gustave Doré</i>	429
	“First, thou thyself, with damsel and with dwarf, Shalt ride to Arthur’s court”	<i>Gustave Doré</i>	435
GERAINT AND ENID			
	‘“Friend, let her eat ; the damsel is so faint”’	<i>Gustave Doré</i>	443
	‘He turn’d his face And kiss’d her climbing’	<i>Gustave Doré</i>	453
MERLIN AND VIVIEN			
	‘At Merlin’s feet the wily Vivien lay’	<i>Gustave Doré</i>	469
	‘“I took his brush and blotted out the bird”’	<i>Gustave Doré</i>	477
	‘“I have made his glory mine”’	<i>Gustave Dore</i>	486
LANCELOT AND ELAINE			
	‘The lily maid Elaine Lifted her eyes and read his lineaments’	<i>Gustave Doré</i>	491
	‘Day by day she past In either twilight ghost-like to and fro’	<i>Gustave Doré</i>	503
	‘She did not seem as dead, But fast asleep’	<i>Gustave Doré</i>	509
GUINEVERE			
	‘They rode to the divided way, There kiss’d, and parted weeping’	<i>Gustave Doré</i>	555
	‘He paused, and in the pause she crept an inch Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet’	<i>Gustave Doré</i>	563

BALLADS AND OTHER POEMS

COLUMBUS (see page 603)

Christopher Columbus

577

From a painting in the Ministry of Marine at Madrid

THE SISTERS

'We left her, happy each in each'

Mary Hallock Foote

591

TO VICTOR HUGO

Victor Hugo

612

From a photograph

TO DANTE

Dante Alighieri

S. S. Kilburn

615

TIRESIAS AND OTHER POEMS

TO E. FITZGERALD

Edward Fitzgerald

617

From a photograph

THE WRECK

'The lost sea-home'

J. Davidson

625

THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE AT BALACLAVA

'The trumpet, the gallop, the charge, and the
might of the fight'

Winslow Homer

641

LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER, ETC.

'Late, my grandson! half the morning have I
paced these sandy tracts'

Thomas Moran

649

'Sinking with the sinking wreck'

G. Perkins

651

'In this gap between the sandhills, whence you
see the Locksley tower,'Here we met, our latest meeting—Amy—sixty
years ago'

W. J. Hennessy

655

DEMETER AND OTHER POEMS

ON THE JUBILEE OF QUEEN VICTORIA

Queen Victoria (1887)

659

From a photograph

THE RING

James Russell Lowell

669

From a photograph

THE PROGRESS OF SPRING

'She comes on waste and wood,
On farm and field'

J. A. Brown

685

QUEEN MARY: A DRAMA

Queen Mary

695

*From a portrait in the National Gallery painted,
when she was twenty-eight years of age, by
Joannes Corvus*

King Philip II.

707

*From the painting by Alonso Sanchez Coello in
the National Portrait Gallery*

Gate-house, Westminster

721

From a photograph

Whitehall

731

From 'Londina Illustrata,' London, 1819

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

xv

Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury	747
<i>From a portrait in the National Portrait Gallery, painted, when he was fifty-seven years of age, by G. Flaccius</i>	
Queen Elizabeth	767
<i>From Holl's engraving of an original portrait in Queen Victoria's collection in St. James's Palace</i>	
Sir William Cecil	771
<i>From Freeman's engraving of the original portrait by Marc Gheerardts, in the National Portrait Gallery</i>	
HAROLD : A DRAMA	
Lord Lytton	773
<i>From a photograph</i>	
Stamford Bridge	803
<i>From a photograph</i>	
Battle Abbey	813
<i>From a photograph</i>	
BECKET	
Lord Selborne (Roundell Palmer)	815
<i>From a photograph</i>	
Sir Henry Irving as Becket	831
<i>From a photograph</i>	
Ellen Terry as Rosamund	857
<i>From a photograph</i>	
' "The Mother Church of England, My Canterbury "	865
<i>From a photograph</i>	
Transept of Martyrdom, Canterbury Cathedral	869
<i>From a photograph</i>	
THE FALCON	
' "Get the Count to give me his falcon, And that will make me well ' "	872
<i>W. H. Low</i>	

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

ALFRED TENNYSON was born August 6, 1809, at Somersby, a little village in Lincolnshire, England. His father was the rector of the parish; his mother, whose maiden name was Elizabeth Fytche, and whose character he touched in his poem 'Isabel,' was the daughter of a clergyman; and one of his brothers, who later took the name of Charles Turner, was also a clergyman. The religious nature in the poet was a constant element in his poetry, and with it may be named an abiding love of the natural world, which yielded its secrets to an observation which was singularly keen, and a philosophic reflection which made Tennyson reveal in his poetry an apprehension of the laws of life, akin to what Darwin was disclosing in his contemporaneous career.

In his early 'Ode to Memory,' Tennyson has translated into verse the consciousness which woke in him in the secluded fields of his Lincolnshire birthplace. For companionship he had the large circle of his own home, for he was one of eight brothers and four sisters; and in that little society there was not only the miniature world of sport and study, but a very close companionship with the large world of imagination. They had their jousts and tournaments, their revivification of knightly deeds in their sports, and Alfred was the improvisatore who gathered the other children about him and regaled them with tales of wonder, drawn partly from his reading, partly from his own fertile fancy.

He had, moreover, the favoring poetic sympathy of two at any rate in the circle. From very childhood he lisped in numbers, for the numbers came on every wind, and his brothers Frederick and Charles, the one two years, the other one year his senior, were also given to poetic composition, so that after Charles and Alfred had been at school in Louth a short time, the brothers put their verses together and induced the local booksellers and printers, Messrs. Jackson, to publish the book under the title *Poems by Two Brothers*. Frederick Tennyson indeed contributed four poems; the rest were divided between Charles and Alfred, but in the absence of exact data, the present Lord Tennyson, though he had memoranda as well as the memory of his uncles to rely upon, was unable, when he reprinted the volume sixty years after its first publication, to determine exactly the authorship of all the poems. The verses, which are preserved in the *Cambridge Edition* of Tennyson's poems, are interesting as indicating the careful scholarship of the boys and the impression made on them by Byron, rather than for any marked poetic quality.

Frederick Tennyson was already at Cambridge when Charles and Alfred went up to that University in 1828, and were matriculated at Trinity College. Alfred Tennyson acquired there, as so many other notable Englishmen, not only intellectual discipline, but that close companionship with picked men which is engendered by the half monastic seclusion of the English university.

There was a company which from its number was dubbed the Apostles, to which he found entrance, and here he met men who influenced his early life and in a few instances were close companions during his whole career. Chief among these was the brilliant Sterling, and others were James Spedding, the expositor of Bacon, Trench, afterward Archbishop of Dublin, Richard Monckton Milnes, better known as Lord Houghton, Dean Alford, W. H. Brookfield the intimate friend of Thackeray, J. M. Kemble, and Kinglake, the author of *Eothen* and historian of the Crimean War. Among these men, growing into manhood during the stirring times of Reform, Tennyson drew in the long breaths of political freedom and loyalty to the highest ideals of English life, which were later to find expression in *Maud* and the historical dramas. He was under the influence also of Maurice, whose friendship was a lifelong inspiration to him; and perhaps more potent than all other influences was that which sprang from his intimacy with Arthur Hallam.

This young collegian, a son of the historian, was looked upon as a man of great promise who had already indeed demonstrated his power by writings of a mature order. His friendship with Tennyson brought him to the poet's home, and he became engaged to Tennyson's sister Emily. The two men shared their studies and hopes and dreams, and when in 1830 Tennyson published *Poems chiefly Lyrical*, Hallam came forward with a review of the volume in *The Englishman's Magazine*. In 1832 the volume was followed by *Poems*, by Alfred Tennyson, and then there was a silence of ten years. Hallam died in 1833, and his death seems to have so stirred the depths of the poet's nature that he retired into a life almost of seclusion in which he confronted the problems of life and eternity much as many a reformer or preacher has girded up his loins in the wilderness.

It must not be supposed that this decade was one of brooding alone. At first indeed, in the privacy of the Somersby rectory he devoted himself with systematic industry to study rather than to composition. Once in a while he used his little hoard of savings in a visit to London to see his college friends living there, and he made a journey also into the Lake country. Yet he could not long withhold himself from his vocation, and little by little he showed poems to his friends and received their criticism. In 1842 appeared a fuller volume of *Poems*, in 1847 *The Princess* was published, and in 1850 appeared the great elegy *In Memoriam A. H. H.*, which set the seal upon his poetic reputation.

His livelihood, during these years, had been mainly a small sum which had come from his grandfather, his father having died in 1831, but now there was sufficient security in the income from his writings to enable him to renew an engagement with Emily Sellwood, whose younger sister had married Charles Tennyson, and who herself on that occasion was bridesmaid, with Alfred Tennyson as groomsman. The marriage took place in the same month that *In Memoriam* was published, and the wedded life which followed was the great anchorage of the poet's soul. In after life he said: 'The peace of God came into my life before the altar when I wedded her.' He testified of his affection when he published the lyrical dedication to the *Enoch Arden* volume, beginning:

'Dear, dear and true, — no truer Time himself'

and also the lines 'June bracken and heather' which introduce the *Ennion* volume. The same year Tennyson was made Poet Laureate in successorship to Wordsworth.

Tennyson regarded his post as Poet Laureate in the light of a high poetic and patriotic ardor. When he was meditating his first laureate poem 'To the Queen,' he was thinking especially of a stanza in which 'the empire of Wordsworth should be asserted: for he was a representative Poet Laureate, such a poet as kings should honor, and such an one as would do honor to kings;—making the period of a reign famous by the utterance of memorable words concerning that period.' The laurel 'greener from the brows of him that utter'd nothing base,' was indeed worn with dignity and grace, and in the *Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington*, and the spirited 'Britons, guard your own,' 'The Third of February,' 'Hands all round,' and 'The Charge of the Light Brigade,' Tennyson showed the passion of the English patriot in a manner which has been neither echoed nor eclipsed in the verses which in a similar spirit have been contributed by Rudyard Kipling in recent years to *The Times*. But it was in *Maud* that Tennyson concentrated the feeling which was roused in his nature by the compromise which he believed the commercial spirit of his day was seeking to effect between national honor and national prosperity; and it is not strange that this poem, with its almost incoherent cries, should have seemed to many of his countrymen as almost the utterance of an insane man.

The record of Tennyson's career from this time forward is marked by the successive publication of his works. He changed his home more than once, partly in obedience to an almost morbid fear of intrusion; but a family grew up about him, and his domestic life was one of great serenity and beauty. He travelled little out of his own country, and he was not greatly given to letter writing; but he numbered amongst devoted friends some of the greatest Englishmen of his time. His son has printed the letters which passed between him and the Queen, showing how genuine and deep was the emotion which each excited in the other. He was warmly attached to Robert Browning; the Duke of Argyll was an intimate companion, and Edward FitzGerald, with his whimsical hero worship, laid his tribute with affectionate constancy at Tennyson's feet.

When in later life he was now and then a figure in London society, he cared most for the companionship which, in the Metaphysical Society, brought him in close contact with Dean Stanley, Cardinal Manning, James Martineau, Edmund Lushington, and many others among ecclesiastics, Carpenter, Huxley, Tyndall and other scientists, and Froude, Bagehot, Pattison, Harrison, Hutton, men of letters and learning.

The *Idylls of the King*, published in 1859, a less complete group than that now included under the title, continued his great poetic line, which was also in its purpose an epitome of the greater England of his soul's allegiance, but the most notable turn in his poetic career was when, in 1875, nearly fifty years after his earliest venture in verse, he published his drama of *Queen Mary*. He had no thought of writing what are known as closet dramas. The dramatic instinct in him was powerful, even though it had thus far shown itself

mainly in lyric form, and from this time forward he gave the best of his power to writing for the stage. With slight exceptions, these dramas are interpretations of English history. They are serious studies, and a serious attempt was made to give them proper stage presentation; but the conditions of the theatre in England and it may be said also Tennyson's too archaic conception of treatment seemed to stand in the way of anything like popular recognition.

In 1884 the Queen raised him to the peerage, to which twice before he had been invited, and he became Baron of Aldworth and Farringford. The elevation was in the direct line of English tradition, and the nobility of the kingdom was enriched by his succession. He continued to publish until his death. Indeed, the final volume of his poems was in press at the time of his death, which occurred October 7, 1892. He was buried in the 'Poet's Corner' of Westminster Abbey, on the 12th of the same month.

TO THE QUEEN

*Revered, beloved — O you that hold
A nobler office upon earth
Than arms, or power of brain, or birth
Could give the warrior kings of old,*

*Victoria, — since your Royal grace
To one of less desert allows
This laurel greener from the brows
Of him that utter'd nothing base ;*

*And should your greatness, and the care
That yokes with empire, yield you time
To make demand of modern rhyme
If aught of ancient worth be there ;*

*Then — while a sweeter music wakes,
And thro' wild March the throstle calls,
Where all about your palace-walls
The sun-lit almond-blossom shakes —*

*Take, Madam, this poor book of song ;
For tho' the faults were thick as dust
In vacant chambers, I could trust
Your kindness. May you rule us long,*

*And leave us rulers of your blood
As noble till the latest day !
May children of our children say,
'She wrought her people lasting good ;*

*' Her court was pure ; her life serene ;
God gave her peace ; her land reposed ;
A thousand claims to reverence closed
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen ;*

*'And statesmen at her council met
Who knew the seasons when to take
Occasion by the hand, and make
The bounds of freedom wider yet*

*'By shaping some august decree
Which kept her throne unshaken still,
Broad-based upon her people's will,
And compass'd by the inviolate sea.'*

March, 1851.



' Where Claribel low-lieth
The breezes pause and die '

JUVENILIA

CLARIBEL

A MELODY

I

WHERE Claribel low-lieth
The breezes pause and die,
Letting the rose-leaves fall;
But the solemn oak-tree sigheth,
Thick-leaved, ambrosial,
With an ancient melody
Of an inward agony,
Where Claribel low-lieth.

II

At eve the beetle boometh
Athwart the thicket lone;
At noon the wild bee hummeth
About the moss'd headstone;
At midnight the moon cometh,
And looketh down alone.
Her song the lintwhite swelleth,
The clear-voiced mavis dwelleth,
The callow throstle lispeth,
The slumbrous wave outwelleth,
The babbling runnel crispeth,
The hollow grot replieth
Where Claribel low-lieth.

NOTHING WILL DIE

WHEN will the stream be aweary of
flowing

Under my eye ?

When will the wind be aweary of
blowing

Over the sky ?

When will the clouds be aweary of
fleeting ?

When will the heart be aweary of
beating ?

And nature die ?

Never, O, never, nothing will die ;

The stream flows,

The wind blows,

The cloud fleets,

The heart beats,

Nothing will die.

Nothing will die ;

All things will change

Thro' eternity.

'T is the world's winter ;

Autumn and summer

Are gone long ago ;

Earth is dry to the centre,

But spring, a new comer,

A spring rich and strange,

Shall make the winds blow

Round and round,

Thro' and thro'.

Here and there,

Till the air

And the ground

Shall be fill'd with life anew.

The world was never made ;

It will change, but it will not
fade.

So let the wind range ;

For even and morn

Ever will be

Thro' eternity.

Nothing was born ;

Nothing will die ;

All things will change.

ALL THINGS WILL DIE

CLEARLY the blue river chimes in its
flowing

Under my eye ;

Warmly and broadly the south winds
are blowing

Over the sky.

One after another the white clouds
are fleeting ;

Every heart this May morning in joy-
ance is beating

Full merrily ;

Yet all things must die.

The stream will cease to flow ;

The wind will cease to blow ; 10

The clouds will cease to fleet ;

The heart will cease to beat ;

For all things must die.

All things must die.

Spring will come never more.

O, vanity !

Death waits at the door.

See ! our friends are all forsaking

The wine and the merrymaking.

We are call'd — we must go. 20

Laid low, very low,

In the dark we must lie.

The merry glees are still ;

The voice of the bird

Shall no more be heard,

Nor the wind on the hill.

O, misery !

Hark ! death is calling

While I speak to ye,

The jaw is falling, 30

The red cheek paling,

The strong limbs failing ;

Ice with the warm blood mixing ;

The eyeballs fixing.

Nine times goes the passing bell :

Ye merry souls, farewell.

The old earth

Had a birth,

As all men know,

Long ago. 40

And the old earth must die.

So let the warm winds range,

And the blue wave beat the
shore ;

For even and morn

Ye will never see

Thro' eternity.

All things were born.

Ye will come never more,

For all things must die.

LEONINE ELEGIACS

LOW-FLOWING breezes are roaming
the broad valley dimm'd in the
gloaming ;

Thoro' the black-stemm'd pines only
the far river shines.

Creeping thro' blossomy rushes and
bowers of rose-blowing bushes,
Down by the poplar tall rivulets bab-
ble and fall.
Barketh the shepherd-dog cheerly; the
grasshopper carolleteth clearly;
Deeply the wood-dove coos; shrilly
the owl halloos;
Winds creep; dews fall chilly: in
her first sleep earth breathes
stilly:
Over the pools in the burn water-
gnats murmur and mourn.
Sadly the far kine loweth; the glim-
mering water outfloweth;
Twin peaks shadow'd with pine slope
to the dark hyaline.
Low-throned Hesper is stayed be-
tween the two peaks; but the
Naiad
Throbbing in mild unrest holds him
beneath in her breast.
The ancient poetess singeth that Hes-
perus all things bringeth,
Smoothing the wearied mind: bring
me my love, Rosalind.
Thou comest morning or even; she
cometh not morning or even.
False-eyed Hesper, unkind, where is
my sweet Rosalind?

SUPPOSED CONFESSIONS

OF A SECOND-RATE SENSITIVE MIND

O GOD! my God! have mercy now.
I faint, I fall. Men say that 'Thou
Didst die for me, for such as *me*,
Patient of ill, and death, and scorn,
And that my sin was as a thorn
Among the thorns that girt Thy brow,
Wounding Thy soul. — That even
now,
In this extremest misery
Of ignorance, I should require
A sign! and if a bolt of fire 10
Would rive the slumbrous summer
noon
While I do pray to Thee alone,
Think my belief would stronger grow!
Is not my human pride brought low?
The boastings of my spirit still?
The joy I had in my free-will
All cold, and dead, and corpse-like
grown?

And what is left to me but Thou,
And faith in Thee? Men pass me by;
Christians with happy countenances —
And children all seem full of Thee!
And women smile with saint-like
glances 22
Like Thine own mother's when she
bow'd
Above Thee, on that happy morn
When angels spake to men aloud,
And Thou and peace to earth were
born.
Good-will to me as well as all —
I one of them; my brothers they;
Brothers in Christ — a world of peace
And confidence, day after day; 30
And trust and hope till things should
cease,
And then one Heaven receive us all.

How sweet to have a common faith!
To hold a common scorn of death!
And at a burial to hear
The creaking cords which wound and
eat
Into my human heart, whene'er
Earth goes to earth, with grief, not
fear,
With hopeful grief, were passing
sweet!

Thrice happy state again to be 40
The trustful infant on the knee,
Who lets his rosy fingers play
About his mother's neck, and knows
Nothing beyond his mother's eyes!
They comfort him by night and day;
They light his little life alway;
He hath no thought of coming woes;
He hath no care of life or death;
Scarce outward signs of joy arise,
Because the Spirit of happiness 50
And perfect rest so inward is;
And loveth so his innocent heart,
Her temple and her place of birth,
Where she would ever wish to dwell,
Life of the fountain there, beneath
Its salient springs, and far apart,
Hating to wander out on earth,
Or breathe into the hollow air,
Whose chillness would make visible
Her subtil, warm, and golden breath,
Which mixing with the infant's blood,
Fulfil him with beatitude. 60
O, sure it is a special care
Of God, to fortify from doubt,

To arm in proof, and guard about
With triple-mailed trust, and clear
Delight, the infant's dawning year.

Would that my gloomed fancy were
As thine, my mother, when with
brows

Propt on thy knees, my hands upheld
In thine, I listen'd to thy vows, ⁷¹
For me outpour'd in holiest prayer—
For me unworthy!—and beheld
Thy mild deep eyes upraised, that
knew

The beauty and repose of faith,
And the clear spirit shining thro'.
O, wherefore do we grow awry
From roots which strike so deep?
why dare

Paths in the desert? Could not I
Bow myself down, where thou hast
knelt, ⁸⁰

To the earth—until the ice would
melt

Here, and I feel as thou hast felt?
What devil had the heart to scathe
Flowers thou hadst rear'd—to brush
the dew

From thine own lily, when thy grave
Was deep, my mother, in the clay?
Myself? Is it thus? Myself? Had I
So little love for thee? But why
Prevail'd not thy pure prayers? Why
pray

To one who heeds not, who can save
But will not? Great in faith, and
strong ⁹¹

Against the grief of circumstance
Wert thou, and yet unheard. What
if

Thou pleadest still, and seest me drive
Thro' utter dark a full-sail'd skiff,
Unpiloted i' the echoing dance
Of reboant whirlwinds, stooping low
Unto the death, not sunk! I know
At matins and at evensong,
That thou, if thou wert yet alive, ¹⁰⁰
In deep and daily prayers wouldst
strive

To reconcile me with thy God.
Albeit, my hope is gray, and cold
At heart, thou wouldst murmur
still—

'Bring this lamb back into Thy fold,
My Lord, if so it be Thy will.'
Wouldst tell me I must brook the rod
And chastisement of human pride;

That pride, the sin of devils, stood,
Betwixt me and the light of God; ¹¹⁰
That hitherto I had defied
And had rejected God—that grace
Would drop from His o'er-brimming
love,

As manna on my wilderness,
If I would pray—that God would
move

And strike the hard, hard rock, and
thence,

Sweet in their utmost bitterness,
Would issue tears of penitence
Which would keep green hope's life.
Alas!

I think that pride hath now no place
Nor sojourn in me. I am void, ¹²¹
Dark, formless, utterly destroyed.

Why not believe then? Why not yet
Anchor thy frailty there, where man
Hath moor'd and rested? Ask the sea
At midnight, when the crisp slope
waves

After a tempest rib and fret
The broad-imbas'd beach, why he
Slumbers not like a mountain tarn?
Wherefore his ridges are not curls ¹³⁰
And ripples of an inland mere?
Wherefore he moaneth thus, nor can
Draw down into his vexed pools
All that blue heaven which hues and
paves

The other? I am too forlorn,
Too shaken: my own weakness fools
My judgment, and my spirit whirls,
Moved from beneath with doubt and
fear.

'Yet,' said I, in my morn of youth,
The unsunn'd freshness of my
strength, ¹⁴⁰

When I went forth in quest of truth,
'It is man's privilege to doubt,
If so be that from doubt at length
Truth may stand forth unmoved of
change,

An image with profulgent brows
And perfect limbs, as from the storm
Of running fires and fluid range
Of lawless airs, at last stood out
This excellence and solid form
Of constant beauty. For the ox ¹⁵⁰
Feeds in the herb, and sleeps, or fills
The horned valleys all about,
And hollows of the fringed hills

In summer heats, with placid lows
Unfearing, till his own blood flows
About his hoof. And in the flocks
The lamb rejoiceth in the year,
And raceth freely with his fere,
And answers to his mother's calls 159
From the flower'd furrow. In a time
Of which he wots not, run short pains
Thro' his warm heart; and then, from
whence

He knows not, on his light there falls
A shadow; and his native slope,
Where he was wont to leap and climb,
Floats from his sick and filmed eyes,
And something in the darkness draws
His forehead earthward, and he dies.
Shall man live thus, in joy and hope
As a young lamb, who cannot dream,
Living, but that he shall live on? 171
Shall we not look into the laws
Of life and death, and things that
seem,

And things that be, and analyze
Our double nature, and compare
All creeds till we have found the one,
If one there be? Ay me! I fear
All may not doubt, but everywhere
Some must clasp idols. Yet, my God,
Whom call I idol? Let Thy dove 180
Shadow me over, and my sins
Be unremember'd, and Thy love
Enlighten me. O, teach me yet
Somewhat before the heavy clod
Weighs on me, and the busy fret
Of that sharp-headed worm begins
In the gross blackness underneath.

O weary life! O weary death!
O spirit and heart made desolate!
O damned vacillating state! 190

THE KRAKEN

BELOW the thunders of the upper
deep,
Far, far beneath in the abysmal sea,
His ancient, dreamless, uninvaded
sleep
The Kraken sleepeth: faintest sun-
lights flee
About his shadowy sides; above him
swell
Huge sponges of millennial growth
and height;
And far away into the sickly light,

From many a wondrous grot and se-
cret cell
Unnumber'd and enormous polypi
Winnow with giant arms the slumber-
ing green.
There hath he lain for ages, and will
lie
Battening upon huge sea-worms in
his sleep,
Until the latter fire shall heat the
deep;
Then once by man and angels to be
seen,
In roaring he shall rise and on the sur-
face die.

SONG

THE winds, as at their hour of birth,
Leaning upon the ridged sea,
Breathed low around the rolling earth
With mellow preludes, 'We are
free.'

The streams, through many a liliated
row
Down-carolling to the crisped sea,
Low-tinkled with a bell-like flow
Atween the blossoms, 'We are
free.'

LILIAN

I

AIRY, fairy Lilian,
Flitting, fairy Lilian,
When I ask her if she love me
Clasps her tiny hands above me,
Laughing all she can;
She'll not tell me if she love me,
Cruel little Lilian.

II

When my passion seeks
Pleasance in love-sighs,
She, looking thro' and thro' me
Thoroughly to undo me,
Smiling, never speaks:
So innocent-arch, so cunning-simple,
From beneath her gathered wimple
Glancing with black-beaded eyes,
Till the lightning laughers dimple
The baby-roses in her cheeks;
Then away she flies.

III

Prythee weep, May Lilian !
 Gaiety without eclipse
 Wearieth me, May Lilian ;
 Thro' my very heart it thrilleth
 When from crimson-threaded lips
 Silver-treble laughter trilleth :
 Prythee weep, May Lilian !

IV

Praying all I can,
 If prayers will not hush thee,
 Airy Lilian,
 Like a rose-leaf I will crush thee,
 Fairy Lilian.

ISABEL

EYES not down-dropt nor over-bright,
 but fed
 With the clear-pointed flame of
 chastity,
 Clear, without heat, undying, tended
 by
 Pure vestal thoughts in the trans-
 lucent fane
 Of her still spirit ; locks not wide-dis-
 spread,
 Madonna-wise on either side her head ;
 Sweet lips whereon perpetually
 did reign
 The summer calm of golden charity,
 Were fixed shadows of thy fixed
 mood,
 Revered Isabel, the crown and
 head,
 The stately flower of female fortitude,
 Of perfect wifehood and pure
 lowliness.

The intuitive decision of a bright
 And thorough-edged intellect to part
 Error from crime ; a prudence to
 withhold ;
 The laws of marriage character'd
 in gold
 Upon the blanch'd tablets of her
 heart ;
 A love still burning upward, giving
 light
 To read those laws ; an accent very low
 in blandishment, but a most silver
 flow
 Of subtle-paced counsel in dis-
 tress,

Right to the heart and brain, tho' un-
 descried,
 Winning its way with extreme
 gentleness

Thro' all the outworks of suspicious
 pride ;

A courage to endure and to obey ;
 A hate of gossip parlance, and of
 sway,

Crown'd Isabel, thro' all her placid
 life,

The queen of marriage, a most per-
 fect wife.

The mellow'd reflex of a winter moon ;
 A clear stream flowing with a muddy
 one,

Till in its onward current it absorbs
 With swifter movement and in
 purer light

The vexed eddies of its wayward
 brother ;

A leaning and upbearing parasite,
 Clothing the stem, which else had
 fallen quite,

With cluster'd flower-bells and am-
 brosial orbs

Of rich fruit-bunches leaning on
 each other —

Shadow forth thee : — the world
 hath not another

(Tho' all her fairest forms are types of
 thee,

And thou of God in thy great charity)
 Of such a finish'd chasten'd purity.

MARIANA

* Mariana in the moated grange.
Measure for Measure.

With blackest moss the flower-plots
 Were thickly crusted, one and all ;
 The rusted nails fell from the knots
 That held the pear to the gable-
 wall.

The broken sheds look'd sad and
 strange :

Unlifted was the clinking latch ;
 Weeded and worn the ancient
 thatch

Upon the lonely moated grange.

She only said, ' My life is dreary,
 He cometh not,' she said ;

She said, ' I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead !'



' Her tears fell with the dews at even ;
Her tears fell ere the dews were dried '

Her tears fell with the dews at
even :

Her tears fell ere the dews were
dried ;

She could not look on the sweet hea-
ven,

Either at morn or eventide.

After the flitting of the bats,

When thickest dark did trance the
sky,

She drew her casement-curtain by,
And glanced athwart the glooming
flats. ²⁰

She only said, 'The night is
dreary,

He cometh not,' she said ;

She said, 'I am weary, weary,
I would that I were dead !'

Upon the middle of the night,
Waking she heard the night-fowl
crow ;

The cock sung out an hour ere light ;
From the dark fen the oxen's low
Came to her ; without hope of change,
In sleep she seem'd to walk for-
lorn, ³⁰

Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed
morn

About the lonely moated grange.

She only said, 'The day is dreary,

He cometh not,' she said ;

She said, 'I am weary, weary,
I would that I were dead !'

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,

And o'er it many, round and small,
 The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.
 Hard by a poplar shook alway,
 All silver-green with gnarled bark:
 For leagues no other tree did mark
 The level waste, the rounding gray.
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,
 He cometh not,' she said;
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!'

And ever when the moon was low,
 And the shrill winds were up and
 away,
 In the white curtain, to and fro,
 She saw the gusty shadow sway.
 But when the moon was very low,
 And wild winds bound within their
 cell,
 The shadow of the poplar fell
 Upon her bed, across her brow.
 She only said, 'The night is
 dreary,
 He cometh not,' she said;
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!' 60

All day within the dreamy house,
 The doors upon their hinges creak'd;
 The blue fly sung in the pane; the
 mouse
 Behind the mouldering wainscot
 shriek'd,
 Or from the crevice peer'd about.
 Old faces glimmer'd thro' the doors,
 Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
 Old voices called her from without.
 She only said, 'My life is dreary,
 He cometh not,' she said;
 She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 I would that I were dead!'

The sparrow's chirrup on the roof,
 The slow clock ticking, and the sound
 Which to the wooing wind aloof
 The poplar made, did all confound
 Her sense; but most she loathed the
 hour

When the thick-moted sunbeam lay
 Athwart the chambers, and the day
 Was sloping toward his western
 bower.

Then said she, 'I am very dreary,
 He will not come,' she said;
 She wept, 'I am aweary, aweary,
 O God, that I were dead!'

TO —

I

CLEAR-HEADED friend, whose joyful
 scorn,
 Edged with sharp laughter, cuts
 atwain
 The knots that tangle human
 creeds,
 The wounding cords that bind and
 strain
 The heart until it bleeds,
 Ray-fringed eyelids of the morn
 Roof not a glance so keen as thine;
 If aught of prophecy be mine,
 Thou wilt not live in vain.

II

Low-cowering shall the Sophist sit;
 Falsehood shall bare her plaitee
 brow;
 Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not
 now
 With shrilling shafts of subtle wit.
 Nor martyr-flames, nor trenchant
 swords
 Can do away that ancient lie;
 A gentler death shall Falsehood die,
 Shot thro' and thro' with cunning
 words.

III

Weak Truth a-leaning on her crutch,
 Wan, wasted Truth in her utmost
 need,
 Thy kingly intellect shall feed,
 Until she be an athlete bold,
 And weary with a finger's touch
 Those writhed limbs of lightning
 speed;
 Like that strange angel which of old,
 Until the breaking of the light,
 Wrestled with wandering Israel,
 Past Yabbok brook the livelong
 night,
 And heaven's mazed signs stood still
 In the dim tract of Penuel.

MADELINE

I

THOU art not steep'd in golden lan-
 guors,
 No tranced summer calm is thine,
 Ever varying Madeline.

Thro' light and shadow thou dost
range,
Sudden glances, sweet and strange,
Delicious spites and darling angers,
And airy forms of fitting change.

II

Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore.
Revealings deep and clear are thine
Of wealthy smiles; but who may know
Whether smile or frown be fleetest?
Whether smile or frown be sweeter,
Who may know?
Frowns perfect-sweet along the brow
Light-gloomings over eyes divine,
Like little clouds sun-fringed, are
thine,

Ever varying Madeline.
Thy smile and frown are not aloof
From one another,
Each to each is dearest brother;
Hues of the silken sheeny woof
Momentarily shot into each other.
All the mystery is thine;
Smiling, frowning, evermore,
Thou art perfect in love-lore,
Ever varying Madeline.

III

A subtle, sudden flame,
By veering passion fann'd,
About thee breaks and dances:
When I would kiss thy hand,
The flush of anger'd shame
O'erflows thy calmer glances,
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown:
But when I turn away,
Thou, willing me to stay,
Wooest not, nor vainly wranglest,
But, looking fixedly the while,
All my bounding heart entanglest
In a golden-netted smile;
Then in madness and in bliss,
If my lips should dare to kiss
Thy taper fingers amorously,
Again thou blushest angrily;
And o'er black brows drops down
A sudden-curved frown.

SONG—THE OWL

I

WHEN cats run home and light is come,
And dew is cold upon the ground,

And the far-off stream is dumb,
And the whirring sail goes round,
And the whirring sail goes round;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

II

When merry milkmaids click the latch,
And rarely smells the new-mown
hay,
And the cock hath sung beneath the
thatch
Twice or thrice his roundelay,
Twice or thrice his roundelay;
Alone and warming his five wits,
The white owl in the belfry sits.

SECOND SONG

TO THE SAME

I

THY tuwhits are lull'd, I wot,
Thy tuwhoos of yesternight,
Which upon the dark afloat,
So took echo with delight,
So took echo with delight,
That her voice, untuneful grown,
Wears all day a fainter tone.

II

I would mock thy chaunt anew;
But I cannot mimic it;
Not a whit of thy tuwhoo,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
Thee to woo to thy tuwhit,
With a lengthen'd loud halloo,
Tuwhoo, tuwhit, tuwhit, tu-
whoo-o-o!

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE
ARABIAN NIGHTS

WHEN the breeze of a joyful dawn
blew free
In the silken sail of infancy,
The tide of time flow'd back with me,
The forward-flowing tide of time;
And many a sheeny summer-morn,
Adown the Tigris I was borne,
By Bagdat's shrines of fretted gold,
High-walled gardens green and old;
True Mussulman was I and sworn,
For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Knight my shallop, rustling thro'
 The low and bloomed foliage, drove
 The fragrant, glistening deeps, and
 clove

The citron-shadows in the blue;
 By garden porches on the brim,
 The costly doors flung open wide,
 Gold glittering thro' lamplight dim,
 And broider'd sofas on each side.

In sooth it was a goodly time, 20
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Often, where clear-stemm'd platans
 guard

The outlet, did I turn away
 The boat-head down a broad canal
 From the main river sluiced, where all
 The sloping of the moonlit sward
 Was damask-work, and deep inlay
 Of braided blooms unmown, which
 crept

Adown to where the water slept. 30
 A goodly place, a goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

A motion from the river won
 Ridged the smooth level, bearing on
 My shallop thro' the star-strown calm,
 Until another night in night
 I enter'd, from the clearer light,
 Imbower'd vaults of pillar'd palm,
 Imprisoning sweets, which, as they
 clomb 40
 Heavenward, were stay'd beneath the
 dome

Of hollow boughs. A goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Still onward; and the clear canal
 Is rounded to as clear a lake.
 From the green rivage many a fall
 Of diamond rillels musical,
 Thro' little crystal arches low 49
 Down from the central fountain's flow
 Fallen silver-chiming, seemed to shake
 The sparkling flints beneath the prow.

A goodly place, a goodly time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Above thro' many a bowery turn
 A walk with vari-colored shells
 Wander'd engrain'd. On either side

All round about the fragrant marge
 From fluted vase, and brazen urn 60
 In order, eastern flowers large,
 Some dropping low their crimson
 bells

Half-closed, and others studded wide
 With disks and tiars, fed the time
 With odor in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Far off, and where the lemon grove
 In closest coverture upsprung,
 The living airs of middle night
 Died round the bulbul as he sung; 70
 Not he, but something which pos-
 sess'd

The darkness of the world, delight,
 Life, anguish, death, immortal love,
 Ceasing not, mingled, unrepress'd,
 Apart from place, withholding time,
 But flattering the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Black the garden-bowers and grots
 Slumber'd; the solemn palms were
 ranged

Above, unwoo'd of summer wind; 80
 A sudden splendor from behind
 Flush'd all the leaves with rich gold-
 green,

And, flowing rapidly between
 Their interspaces, counterchanged
 The level lake with diamond-plots
 Of dark and bright. A lovely time,
 For it was in the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Dark-blue the deep sphere overhead,
 Distinct with vivid stars inlaid, 90
 Grew darker from that under-flame;
 So, leaping lightly from the boat,
 With silver anchor left afloat,
 In marvel whence that glory came
 Upon me, as in sleep I sank
 In cool soft turf upon the bank,
 Entranced with that place and time,
 So worthy of the golden prime
 Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Thence thro' the garden I was drawn —
 A realm of pleasure, many a
 mound, 100
 And many a shadow-chequer'd lawn
 Full of the city's stilly sound,
 And deep myrrh-thickets blowing
 round



‘For it was in the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid’

The stately cedar, tamarisks,
Thick rosaries of scented thorn,
Tall orient shrubs, and obelisks
Graven with emblems of the time,
In honor of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid. 110

With dazed vision unawares
From the long alley's latticed shade
Emerged, I came upon the great
Pavilion of the Caliphat.
Right to the carven cedarn doors,
Flung inward over spangled floors,
Broad-based flights of marble stairs
Ran up with golden balustrade,
After the fashion of the time
And humor of the golden prime 120
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

The fourscore windows all alight
As with the quintessence of flame,
A million tapers flaring bright
From twisted silvers look'd to shame
The hollow-vaulted dark, and stream'd
Upon the mooned domes aloof
In inmost Bagdat, till there seem'd
Hundreds of crescents on the roof
Of night new-risen, that marvellous
time 130
To celebrate the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Then stole I up, and trancedly
Gazed on the Persian girl alone,
Serene with argent-lidded eyes
Amorous, and lashes like to rays
Of darkness, and a brow of pearl

Tressed with redolent ebony,
In many a dark delicious curl,
Flowing beneath her rose-hued zone;
The sweetest lady of the time, ¹⁴¹
Well worthy of the golden prime
Of good Haroun Alraschid.

Six columns, three on either side,
Pure silyer, underpropt a rich
Throne of the massive ore, from which
Down-droop'd, in many a floating
fold,

Engarlanded and diaper'd
With inwrought flowers, a cloth of
gold.

Thereon, his deep eye laughter-stirr'd
With merriment of kingly pride, ¹⁵¹
Sole star of all that place and time,
I saw him — in his golden prime,
THE GOOD HAROUN ALRASCHID.

ODE TO MEMORY

ADDRESSED TO —

I

THOU who stealest fire,
From the fountains of the past,
To glorify the present, O, haste,
Visit my low desire!
Strengthen me, enlighten me!
I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

II

Come not as thou camest of late,
Flinging the gloom of yesternight
On the white day, but robed in soften'd
light ¹⁰

Of orient state.

Whilome thou camest with the morn-
ing mist,

Even as a maid, whose stately
brow
The dew-impearled winds of dawn
have kiss'd,

When she, as thou,
Stays on her floating locks the lovely
freight

Of overflowing blooms, and earliest
shoots

Of orient green, giving safe pledge of
fruits,

Which in wintertide shall star
The black earth with brilliance rare. ²⁰

III

Whilome thou camest with the morning
mist,

And with the evening cloud,
Showering thy gleaned wealth into
my open breast;

Those peerless flowers which in the
rudest wind

Never grow sere,
When rooted in the garden of the mind,
Because they are the earliest of the
year.

Nor was the night thy shroud.
In sweet dreams softer than unbroken
rest

Thou loddest by the hand thine infant
Hope. ³⁰

The eddying of her garments caught
from thee

The light of thy great presence; and
the cope

Of the half-attain'd futurity,
Tho' deep not fathomless,

Was cloven with the million stars
which tremble

O'er the deep mind of dauntless in-
fancy.

Small thought was there of life's dis-
tress;

For sure she deem'd no mist of earth
could dull

Those spirit-thrilling eyes so keen and
beautiful;

Sure she was nigher to heaven's
spheres, ⁴⁰

Listening the lordly music flowing
from

The illimitable years.
O, strengthen me, enlighten me!

I faint in this obscurity,
Thou dewy dawn of memory.

IV

Come forth, I charge thee, arise,
Thou of the many tongues, the myriad
eyes!

Thou comest not with shows of flaunt-
ing vines

Unto mine inner eye,
Divinest Memory! ⁵⁰

Thou wert not nursed by the water-
fall

Which ever sounds and shines
A pillar of white light upon the
wall

Of purple cliffs, aloof descried:

Come from the woods that belt the
gray hillside,
The seven elms, the poplars four
That stand beside my father's door,
And chiefly from the brook that
loves

When the first matin-song hath wak-
en'd loud
Over the dark dewy earth forlorn,
What time the amber morn ⁷⁰
Forth gushes from beneath a low-hung
cloud.



'To . . . dimple in the dark of rushy coves'

To purl o'er matted cress and ribbed
sand, ⁵⁹

Or dimple in the dark of rushy coves,
Drawing into his narrow earthen urn,
In every elbow and turn,
The filter'd tribute of the rough wood-
land;

O, hither lead thy feet!
Pour round mine ears the livelong bleat
Of the thick-fleeced sheep from wattled
folds,

Upon the ridged wolds,

▼

Large dowries doth the raptured eye
To the young spirit present

When first she is wed,
And like a bride of old

In triumph led,
With music and sweet showers
Of festal flowers,

Unto the dwelling she must sway.
Well hast thou done, great artist Mem-
ory, ⁸⁰

In setting round thy first experiment
 With royal framework of wrought gold;
 Needs must thou dearly love thy first essay,
 And foremost in thy various gallery
 Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls
 Upon the storied walls;
 For the discovery
 And newness of thine art so pleased thee
 That all which thou hast drawn of fairest
 Or boldest since but lightly weighs 90
 With thee unto the love thou bearest
 The first-born of thy genius. Artist-like,
 Ever retiring thou dost gaze
 On the prime labor of thine early days,
 No matter what the sketch might be :
 Whether the high field on the bushless pike,
 Or even a sand-built ridge
 Of heaped hills that mound the sea,
 Overblown with murmurs harsh,
 Or even a lowly cottage whence we see 100
 Stretch'd wide and wild the waste enormous marsh,
 Where from the frequent bridge,
 Like emblems of infinity,
 The trenched waters run from sky to sky;
 Or a garden bower'd close
 With plaited alleys of the trailing rose,
 Long alleys falling down to twilight grots,
 Or opening upon level plots
 Of crowned lilies, standing near
 Purple-spiked lavender: 110
 Whither in after life retired
 From brawling storms,
 From weary wind,
 With youthful fancy re-inspired,
 We may hold converse with all forms
 Of the many-sided mind,
 And those whom passion hath not blinded,
 Subtle-thoughted, myriad-minded.

My friend, with you to live alone
 Were how much better than to own 120
 A crown, a sceptre, and a throne !

O, strengthen me, enlighten me !
 I faint in this obscurity,
 Thou dewy dawn of memory.

SONG

I

A SPIRIT haunts the year's last hours
 Dwelling amid these yellowing bowers.

To himself he talks ;
 For at eventide, listening earnestly,
 At his work you may hear him sob
 and sigh

In the walks ;
 Earthward he boweth the heavy stalks
 Of the mouldering flowers.
 Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
 Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

II

The air is damp, and hush'd, and close,
 As a sick man's room when he taketh repose

An hour before death ;
 My very heart faints and my whole
 soul grieves
 At the moist rich smell of the rotting leaves,

And the breath
 Of the fading edges of box beneath,
 And the year's last rose.

Heavily hangs the broad sunflower
 Over its grave i' the earth so chilly ;
 Heavily hangs the hollyhock,
 Heavily hangs the tiger-lily.

A CHARACTER

With a half-glance upon the sky
 At night he said, ' The wanderings
 Of this most intricate Universe
 Teach me the nothingness of things ;
 Yet could not all creation pierce
 Beyond the bottom of his eye.

He spake of beauty ; that the dull
 Saw no divinity in grass,
 Life in dead stones, or spirit in air ;

Then looking as 't were in a glass,
He smooth'd his chin and sleek'd his
hair,
And said the earth was beautiful.

He spake of virtue: not the gods
More purely when they wish to charm
Pallas and Juno sitting by;
And with a sweeping of the arm,
And a lack-lustre dead-blue eye,
Devolved his rounded periods.

Most delicately hour by hour
He canvass'd human mysteries,
And trod on silk, as if the winds
Blew his own praises in his eyes,
And stood aloof from other minds
In impotence of fancied power.

With lips depress'd as he were meek,
Himself unto himself he sold:
Upon himself himself did feed;
Quiet, dispassionate, and cold,
And other than his form of creed,
With chisell'd features clear and sleek.

THE POET

THE poet in a golden clime was born,
With golden stars above;
Dower'd with the hate of hate, the
scorn of scorn,
The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good
and ill,
He saw thro' his own soul.
The marvel of the everlasting will,
An open scroll,

Before him lay; with echoing feet he
threaded
The secretest walks of fame:
The viewless arrows of his thoughts
were headed
And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his sil-
ver tongue,
And of so fierce a flight,
From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which
bore
Them earthward till they lit;

Then, like the arrow-seeds of the
field flower,
The fruitful wit

Cleaving took root, and springing
forth anew
Where'er they fell, behold,
Like to the mother plant in semblance,
grew
A flower all gold,

And bravely furnish'd all abroad to
fling
The winged shafts of truth,
To throng with stately blooms the
breathing spring
Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs
with beams,
Tho' one did fling the fire;
Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many
dreams
Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth,
the world
Like one great garden show'd,
And thro' the wreaths of floating dark
upcurl'd,
Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august
sunrise
Her beautiful bold brow,
When rites and forms before his burn-
ing eyes
Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden
robes
Sunn'd by those orient skies;
But round about the circles of the
globes
Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced
in flame
WISDOM, a name to shake
All evil dreams of power—a sacred
name.
And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they
ran,
And as the lightning to the thunder

Which follows it, riving the spirit of
man,
Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words.
No sword
Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
But one poor poet's scroll, and with
his word
She shook the world.

THE POET'S MIND

I

Vex not thou the poet's mind
With thy shallow wit ;
Vex not thou the poet's mind,
For thou canst not fathom it.
Clear and bright it should be ever,
Flowing like a crystal river,
Bright as light, and clear as wind.

II

Dark-brow'd sophists, come not
anear ;
All the place is holy ground ;
Hollow smile and frozen sneer
Come not here.
Holy water will I pour
In every spicy flower
Of the laurel-shrubs that hedge it
around.
The flowers would faint at your cruel
cheer.
In your eye there is death,
There is frost in your breath
Which would blight the plants.
Where you stand you cannot hear
From the groves within
The wild-bird's din.
In the heart of the garden the merry
bird chants.
It would fall to the ground if you came
in.
In the middle leaps a fountain
Like sheet lightning,
Ever brightening
With a low melodious thunder ;
All day and all night it is ever drawn
From the brain of the purple moun-
tain
Which stands in the distance yonder.
It springs on a level of bowery lawn,
And the mountain draws it from hea-
ven above,

And it sings a song of undying love ;
And yet, tho' its voice be so clear and
full,
You never would hear it, your ears are
so dull ;
So keep where you are ; you are foul
with sin ;
It would shrink to the earth if you
came in.

THE SEA-FAIRIES

SLOW sail'd the weary mariners and
saw,
Betwixt the green brink and the run-
ning foam,
Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms
prest
To little harps of gold ; and while they
mused,
Whispering to each other half in fear,
Shrill music reach'd them on the mid-
dle sea.

Whither away, whither away, whither
away ? fly no more.
Whither away from the high green
field, and the happy blossoming
shore ?
Day and night to the billow the foun-
tain calls ;
Down shower the gambolling water-
falls
From wandering over the lea ;
Out of the live-green heart of the dells
They freshen the silvery-crimson
shells,
And thick with white bells the clover-
hill swells
High over the full-toned sea.
O, hither, come hither and furl your
sails,
Come hither to me and to me ;
Hither, come hither and frolic and
play ;
Here it is only the mew that wails ;
We will sing to you all the day.
Mariner, mariner, furl your sails,
For here are the blissful downs and
dales,
And merrily, merrily carol the gales,
And the spangle dances in bight and
bay,
And the rainbow forms and flies on
the land
Over the islands free ;

And the rainbow lives in the curve of
the sand;

Hither, come hither and see;

And the rainbow hangs on the poising
wave,

And sweet is the color of cove and
cave, ³⁰

And sweet shall your welcome be.

O, hither, come hither, and be our
lords,

For merry brides are we.

We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak
sweet words;

O, listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
With pleasure and love and jubilee.

O, listen, listen, your eyes shall glisten
When the sharp clear twang of the
golden chords

Runs up the ridged sea.

Who can light on as happy a shore ⁴⁰

All the world o'er, all the world
o'er?

Whither away? listen and stay; mari-
ner, mariner, fly no more.

THE DESERTED HOUSE

I

LIFE and Thought have gone away

Side by side,

Leaving door and windows wide;

Careless tenants they!

II

All within is dark as night:

In the windows is no light;

And no murmur at the door,

So frequent on its hinge before.

III

Close the door, the shutters close,

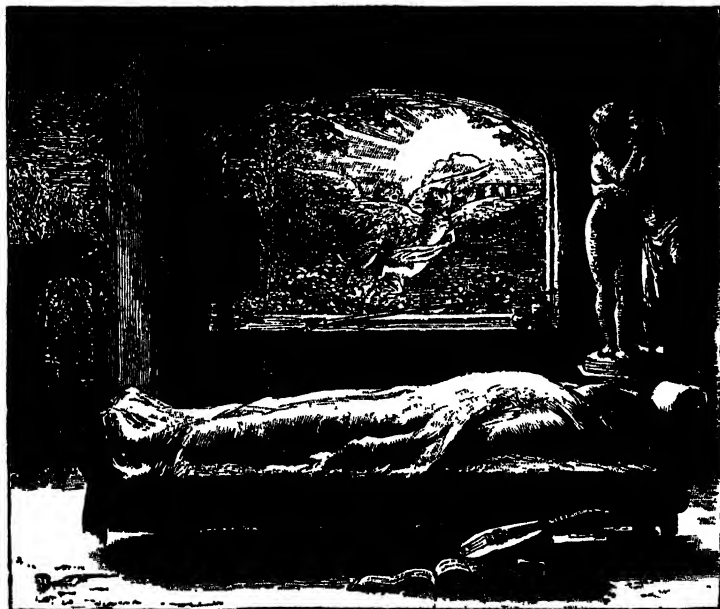
Or thro' the windows we shall
see

The nakedness and vacancy
Of the dark deserted house.

IV

Come away; no more of mirth

Is here or merry-making sound.



'Life and Thought have gone away
Side by side'

The house was builded of the earth,
And shall fall again to ground.

V

Come away ; for Life and Thought
Here no longer dwell,
But in a city glorious —
A great and distant city — have bought
A mansion incorruptible.
Would they could have stayed with
us!

THE DYING SWAN

I

THE plain was grassy, wild and bare,
Wide, wild, and open to the air,
Which had built up everywhere
An under-roof of doleful gray.
With an inner voice the river ran,
Adown it floated a dying swan,
And loudly did lament.
It was the middle of the day.
Ever the weary wind went on, ⁹
And took the reed-tops as it went.

II

Some blue peaks in the distance rose,
And white against the cold-white sky
Shone out their crowning snows.
One willow over the river wept,
And shook the wave as the wind did
sigh ;
Above in the wind was the swallow,
Chasing itself at its own wild will,
And far thro' the marish green and
still
The tangled water-courses slept,
Shot over with purple, and green, and
yellow. ²⁰

III

The wild swan's death-hymn took the
soul
Of that waste place with joy
Hidden in sorrow. At first to the ear
The warble was low, and full and
clear ;
And floating about the under-sky,
Prevailing in weakness, the coronach
stole
Sometimes afar, and sometimes anear ;
But anon her awful jubilant voice,
With a music strange and manifold,
Flow'd forth on a carol free and bold ;

As when a mighty people rejoice ³¹
With shawms, and with cymbals, and
harps of gold,
And the tumult of their acclaim is
roll'd
Thro' the open gates of the city afar,
To the shepherd who watcheth the
evening star.
And the creeping mosses and clamber-
ing weeds,
And the willow-branches hoar and
dank,
And the wavy swell of the souging
reeds,
And the wave-worn horns of the echo-
ing bank,
And the silvery marish-flowers that
throng ⁴⁰
The desolate creeks and pools among,
Were flooded over with eddying song.

A DIRGE

I

Now is done thy long day's work ;
Fold thy palms across thy breast,
Fold thine arms, turn to thy rest.
Let them rave.
Shadows of the silver birk
Sweep the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

II

Thee nor carketh care nor slander ;
Nothing but the small cold worm
Fretteth thine enshrouded form.
Let them rave.
Light and shadow ever wander
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

III

Thou wilt not turn upon thy bed ;
Chaunteth not the brooding bee
Sweeter tones than calumny ?
Let them rave.
Thou wilt never raise thine head
From the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

IV

Crocodiles wept tears for thee ;
The woodbine and eglare
Drip sweeter dew than traitor's tear.
Let them rave.

Rain makes music in the tree
O'er the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

V

Round thee blow, self-pleached deep,
Bramble roses, faint and pale,
And long purples of the dale.
Let them rave.
These in every shower creep
Thro' the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VI

The gold-eyed kingcups fine,
The frail bluebell peercth over
Rare broiery of the purple clover.
Let them rave.
Kings have no such couch as thine,
As the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

VII

Wild words wander here and there ;
God's great gift of speech abused
Makes thy memory confused ;
But let them rave.
The balm-cricket carols clear
In the green that folds thy grave.
Let them rave.

LOVE AND DEATH

WHAT time the mighty moon was
gathering light
Love paced the thymy plots of Para-
dise,
And all about him roll'd his lustrous
eyes ;
When, turning round a cassia, full in
view,
Death, walking all alone beneath a
yew,
And talking to himself, first met his
sight.
'You must begone,' said Death, 'these
walks are mine.'
Love wept and spread his sheeny vans
for flight ;
Yet ere he parted said, 'This hour is
thine ;
Thou art the shadow of life, and as
the tree
Stands in the sun and shadows all
beneath,

So in the light of great eternity
Life eminent creates the shade of death.
The shadow passeth when the tree
shall fall,
But I shall reign for ever over all.'

THE BALLAD OF ORIANA

My heart is wasted with my woe,
Oriana.
There is no rest for me below,
Oriana.
When the long dun wolds are ribb'd
with snow,
And loud the Norland whirlwinds
blow,
Oriana,
Alone I wander to and fro,
Oriana.
Ere the light on dark was growing, 10
Oriana,
At midnight the cock was crowing,
Oriana ;
Winds were blowing, waters flowing,
We heard the steeds to battle going,
Oriana,
Aloud the hollow bugle blowing,
Oriana.

In the yew-wood black as night,
Oriana, 20
Ere I rode into the fight,
Oriana,
While blissful tears blinded my sight
By star-shine and by moonlight,
Oriana,
I to thee my troth did plight,
Oriana.

She stood upon the castle wall,
Oriana ;
She watch'd my crest among them all,
Oriana ; 31
She saw me fight, she heard me call,
When forth there stept a foeman
tall,
Oriana,
Atween me and the castle wall,
Oriana.

The bitter arrow went aside,
Oriana ;
The false, false arrow went aside,
Oriana ; 40



'I to thee my troth did plight,
Oriana'

The damned arrow glanced aside,
And pierced thy heart, my love, my
bride,

Oriana!

Thy heart, my life, my love, my bride,
Oriana!

O, narrow, narrow was the space,
Oriana!

Loud, loud rung out the bugle's brays,
Oriana.

O, deathful stabs were dealt apace, 50
The battle deepen'd in its place,
Oriana;

But I was down upon my face,
Oriana.

They should have stabb'd me where I
lay,
Oriana!

How could I rise and come away,
Oriana?

How could I look upon the day?

They should have stabb'd me where I
lay, 60

Oriana—

They should have trod me into clay,
Oriana.

O breaking heart that will not break,
Oriana!

O pale, pale face so sweet and meek,
Oriana!

Thou smilest, but thou dost not speak,
And then the tears run down my
cheek,

Oriana. 70

What watest thou? whom dost thou
seek,
Oriana?

I cry aloud ; none hear my cries,
 Oriana.
 Thou comest atween me and the
 skies,
 Oriana.

I feel the tears of blood arise
 Up from my heart unto my eyes,
 Oriana.

Within thy heart my arrow lies, 80
 Oriana.

O cursed hand ! O cursed blow
 Oriana !

O happy thou that liest low,
 Oriana !

All night the silence seems to flow
 Beside me in my utter woe,
 Oriana.

A weary, weary way I go,
 Oriana ! 90

When Norland winds pipe down the
 sea,
 Oriana,

I walk, I dare not think of thee,
 Oriana.

Thou liest beneath the greenwood tree,
 I dare not die and come to thee,
 Oriana.

I hear the roaring of the sea,
 Oriana.

CIRCUMSTANCE

Two children in two neighbor villages
 Playing mad pranks along the heathy
 leas ;

Two strangers meeting at a festival ;
 Two lovers whispering by an orchard
 wall ;

Two hives bound fast in one with
 golden ease ;

Two graves grass-green beside a gray
 church-tower,

Wash'd with still rains and daisy-blos-
 somed ;

Two children in one hamlet born and
 bred ;

So runs the round of life from hour
 to hour.

THE MERMAN

I

Who would be
 A merman bold,

Sitting alone,
 Singing alone
 Under the sea,
 With a crown of gold,
 On a throne ?

II

I would be a merman bold,
 I would sit and sing the whole of the
 day ;

I would fill the sea-halls with a voice
 of power ;

But at night I would roam abroad
 and play

With the mermaids in and out of the
 rocks,

Dressing their hair with the white
 sea-flower ;

And holding them back by their flow-
 ing locks

I would kiss them often under the sea,
 And kiss them again till they kiss'd me

Laughingly, laughingly ;
 And then we would wander away,

away,
 To the pale-green sea-groves straight
 and high,

Chasing each other merrily.

III

There would be neither moon nor star,
 But the wave would make music
 above us afar —

Low thunder and light in the magic
 night —

Neither moon nor star.

We would call aloud in the dreamy
 dells,

Call to each other and whoop and cry
 All night, merrily, merrily.

They would pelt me with starry span-
 gles and shells,

Laughing and clapping their hands
 between,

All night, merrily, merrily,
 But I would throw to them back in
 mine

Turkis and agate and almondine ;
 Then leaping out upon them unseen

I would kiss them often under the sea,
 And kiss them again till they kiss'd me

Laughingly, laughingly.
 O, what a happy life were mine

Under the hollow-hung ocean green !
 Soft are the moss-beds under the sea :

We would live merrily, merrily.

THE MERMAID

I

Who would be
A mermaid fair,
Singing alone,
Combing her hair
Under the sea,
In a golden curl
With a comb of pearl,
On a throne?

II

I would be a mermaid fair;
I would sing to myself the whole of
the day;
With a comb of pearl I would comb
my hair;
And still as I comb'd I would sing and
say,
'Who is it loves me? who loves not
me?'
I would comb my hair till my ringlets
would fall

Low adown, low adown,
From under my starry sea-bud crown
Low adown and around,
And I should look like a fountain of
gold

Springing alone
With a shrill inner sound,
Over the throne
In the midst of the hall;
Till that great sea-snake under the sea
From his coiled sleeps in the central
deeps
Would slowly trail himself sevenfold
Round the hall where I sate, and look
in at the gate
With his large calm eyes for the love
of me.
And all the mermen under the sea
Would feel their immortality
Die in their hearts for the love of me.

III

But at night I would wander away,
away,
I would fling on each side my low-
flowing locks,
And lightly vault from the throne and
play
With the mermen in and out of the
rocks;
We would run to and fro, and hide
and seek,

On the broad seawolds in the crim-
son shells,
Whose silvery spikes are nighest the
sea.
But if any came near I would call,
and shriek,
And adown the steep like a wave I
would leap
From the diamond-ledges that jut
from the dells;
For I would not be kiss'd by all who
would list
Of the bold merry mermen under the
sea.
They would sue me, and woo me, and
flatter me,
In the purple twilights under the sea;
But the king of them all would carry
me,
Woo me, and win me, and marry
me,
In the branching jaspers under the
sea.
Then all the dry pied things that be
In the hueless mosses under the sea
Would curl round my silver feet si-
lently,
All looking up for the love of me.
And if I should carol aloud, from
aloft
All things that are forked, and horned,
and soft
Would lean out from the hollow sphere
of the sea,
All looking down for the love of me.

ADELINE

I

MYSTERY of mysteries,
Faintly smiling Adeline,
Scarce of earth nor all divine,
Nor unhappy, nor at rest,
But beyond expression fair
With thy floating flaxen hair;
Thy rose-lips and full blue eyes
Take the heart from out my breast.
Wherefore those dim looks of thine,
Shadowy, dreaming Adeline?

II

Whence that aery bloom of thine,
Like a lily which the sun
Looks thro' in his sad decline.
And a rose-bush leans upon,

Thou that faintly smilest still,
 As a Naiad in a well,
 Looking at the set of day,
 Or a phantom two hours old
 Of a maiden past away,
 Ere the placid lips be cold ?
 Wherefore those faint smiles of
 thine,
 Spiritual Adeline ?

III

What hope or fear or joy is thine ?
 Who talketh with thee, Adeline ?
 For sure thou art not all alone.
 Do beating hearts of salient
 springs
 Keep measure with thine own ?
 Hast thou heard the butterflies
 What they say betwixt their
 wings ?
 Or in stillest evenings
 With what voice the violet woos
 To his heart the silver dews ?
 Or when little airs arise,

How the merry bluebell rings
 To the mosses underneath ?
 Hast thou look'd upon the breath
 Of the lilies at sunrise ?
 Wherefore that faint smile of thine,
 Shadowy, dreaming Adeline ?

IV

Some honey-converse feeds thy mind,
 Some spirit of a crimson rose
 In love with thee forgets to close
 His curtains, wasting odorous sighs
 All night long on darkness blind.
 What aileth thee ? whom waitest thou
 With thy soften'd, shadow'd brow,
 And those dew-lit eyes of thine,
 Thou faint smiler, Adeline ?

V

Lovest thou the doleful wind
 When thou gazest at the skies ?
 Doth the low-tongued Orient
 Wander from the side of the morn,
 Dripping with Sabæan spice



• The low-tongued Orient •

On thy pillow, lowly bent

With melodious airs lovelorn,
Breathing Light against thy face,
While his locks a-drooping twined
Round thy neck in subtle ring
Make a carcanet of rays,
And ye talk together still,
In the language wherewith Spring
Letters cowslips on the hill?
Hence that look and smile of thine,
Spiritual Adeline.

MARGARET

I

O SWEET pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
What lit your eyes with tearful power,
Like moonlight on a falling shower?
Who lent you, love, your mortal dower
Of pensive thought and aspect
pale,
Your melancholy sweet and frail
As perfume of the cuckoo flower?
From the westward-winding flood,
From the evening-lighted wood,
From all things outward you have
won
A tearful grace, as tho' you stood
Between the rainbow and the
sun.
The very smile before you speak,
That dimples your transparent cheek,
Encircles all the heart, and feedeth
The senses with a still delight
Of dainty sorrow without sound,
Like the tender amber round
Which the moon about her spread-
eth,
Moving thro' a fleecy night.

II

You love, remaining peacefully,
To hear the murmur of the strife,
But enter not the toil of life.
Your spirit is the calmed sea,
Laid by the tumult of the fight.
You are the evening star, always
Remaining betwixt dark and
bright;
Full'd echoes of laborious day
Come to you, gleams of mellow
light
Float by you on the verge of
night.

III

What can it matter, Margaret,
What songs below the waning
stars
The lion-heart, Plantagenet,
Sang, looking thro' his prison
bars?
Exquisite Margaret, who can tell
The last wild thought of Chatelet,
Just ere the falling axe did part
The burning brain from the true
heart,
Even in her sight he loved so well?

IV

A fairy shield your Genius made
And gave you on your natal day.
Your sorrow, only sorrow's shade,
Keeps real sorrow far away.
You move not in such solitudes,
You are not less divine,
But more human in your moods,
Than your twin-sister, Adeline.
Your hair is darker, and your eyes
Touch'd with a somewhat darker
hue,
And less aerially blue,
But ever trembling thro' the dew
Of dainty-woeful sympathies.

V

O sweet pale Margaret,
O rare pale Margaret,
Come down, come down, and hear me
speak.
Tie up the ringlets on your cheek.
The sun is just about to set,
The arching limes are tall and shady,
And faint, rainy lights are seen,
Moving in the leavy beech.
Rise from the feast of sorrow, lady,
Where all day long you sit be-
tween
Joy and woe, and whisper each.
Or only look across the lawn,
Look out below your bower-eaves,
Look down, and let your blue eyes
dawn
Upon me thro' the jasmine-leaves.

ROSALIND

I

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
My frolic falcon, with bright eyes,

Whose free delight, from any height
 of rapid flight,
 Stoops at all game that wing the skies,
 My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
 My bright-eyed, wild-eyed falcon,
 whither,
 Careless both of wind and weather,
 Whither fly ye, what game spy ye,
 Up or down the streaming wind?

II

The quick lark's closest-caroll'd
 strains,
 The shadow rushing up the sea,
 The lightning flash atween the rains,
 The sunlight driving down the lea,
 The leaping stream, the very wind,
 That will not stay, upon his way,
 To stoop the cowslip to the plains,
 Is not so clear and bold and free
 As you, my falcon Rosalind.
 You care not for another's pains,
 Because you are the soul of joy,
 Bright metal all without alloy.
 Life shoots and glances thro' your
 veins,
 And flashes off a thousand ways,
 Thro' lips and eyes in subtle rays.
 Your hawk-eyes are keen and bright,
 Keen with triumph, watching still
 To pierce me thro' with pointed light;
 But oftentimes they flash and glitter
 Like sunshine on a dancing rill,
 And your words are seeming-bitter,
 Sharp and few, but seeming-bitter
 From excess of swift delight.

III

Come down, come home, my Rosalind,
 My gay young hawk, my Rosalind.
 Too long you keep the upper skies;
 Too long you roam and wheel at
 will;
 But we must hood your random eyes,
 That care not whom they kill,
 And your cheek, whose brilliant hue
 Is so sparkling-fresh to view,
 Some red heath-flower in the dew,
 Touch'd with sunrise. We must bind
 And keep you fast, my Rosalind,
 Fast, fast, my wild-eyed Rosalind,
 And clip your wings, and make you
 love.
 When we have lured you from above,
 And that delight of frolic flight, by
 day or night,

From North to South,
 We'll bind you fast in silken cords,
 And kiss away the bitter words
 From off your rosy mouth.

ELEÄNORE

I

Thy dark eyes open'd not,
 Nor first reveal'd themselves to Eng-
 lish air,
 For there is nothing here
 Which, from the outward to the in-
 ward brought,
 Moulded thy baby thought.
 Far off from human neighborhood
 Thou wert born, on a summer
 morn,
 A mile beneath the cedar-wood.
 Thy bounteous forehead was not fann'd
 With breezes from our oaken
 glades,
 But thou wert nursed in some delicious¹⁰
 land
 Of lavish lights, and floating
 shades;
 And flattering thy childish thought
 The oriental fairy brought,
 At the moment of thy birth,
 From old well-heads of haunted rills,
 And the hearts of purple hills,
 And shadow'd coves on a sunny shore,
 The choicest wealth of all the
 earth,
 Jewel or shell, or starry ore,
 To deck thy cradle, Eleänore.²⁰

II

Or the yellow-banded bees,
 Thro' half-open lattices
 Coming in the scented breeze,
 Fed thee, a child, lying alone,
 With whitest honey in fairy gar-
 dens cull'd—
 A glorious child, dreaming alone,
 In silk-soft folds, upon yielding down,
 With the hum of swarming bees
 Into dreamful slumber lull'd.³⁰

III

Who may minister to thee?
 Summer herself should minister
 To thee, with fruitage golden-rinded
 On golden salvers, or it may be,
 Youngest Autumn, in a bower

Grape-thicken'd from the light, and
 blinded
 With many a deep-hued bell-like
 flower
 Of fragrant trailers, when the air
 Sleepeth over all the heaven,
 And the crag that fronts the even, 40
 All along the shadowing shore,
 Crimsons over an inland mere.
 Eleānore!

IV

How may full-sail'd verse express,
 How may measured words adore
 The full-flowing harmony
 Of thy swan-like stateliness,
 Eleānore?
 The luxuriant symmetry
 Of thy floating gracefulness, 50
 Eleānore?
 Every turn and glance of thine,
 Every lineament divine,
 Eleānore,
 And the steady sunset glow
 That stays upon thee? For in thee
 Is nothing sudden, nothing single;
 Like two streams of incense free
 From one censer in one shrine,
 Thought and motion mingle, 60
 Mingle ever. Motions flow
 To one another, even as tho'
 They were modulated so
 To an unheard melody,
 Which lives about thee, and a sweep
 Of richest pauses, evermore
 Drawn from each other mellow-deep;
 Who may express thee, Eleānore?

V

I stand before thee, Eleānore;
 I see thy beauty gradually unfold,
 Daily and hourly, more and more. 71
 I muse, as in a trance, the while
 Slowly, as from a cloud of gold,
 Comes out thy deep ambrosial smile.
 I muse, as in a trance, when'er
 The languors of thy love-deep eyes
 Float on to me. I would I were
 So tranced, so rapt in ecstasies,
 To stand apart, and to adore,
 Gazing on thee for evermore, 80
 Serene, imperial Eleānore!

VI

Sometimes, with most intensity
 Gazing, I seem to see

Thought folded over thought, smiling
 asleep,
 Slowly awaken'd, grow so full and
 deep
 In thy large eyes that, overpower'd
 quite,
 I cannot veil or droop my sight,
 But am as nothing in its light.
 As tho' a star, in inmost heaven set,
 Even while we gaze on it, 90
 Should slowly round his orb, and
 slowly grow
 To a full face, there like a sun remain
 Fix'd — then as slowly fade again,
 And draw itself to what it was
 before;
 So full, so deep, so slow,
 Thought seems to come and go
 In thy large eyes, imperial Eleā-
 nore.

VII

As thunder-clouds that, hung on high,
 Roof'd the world with doubt and fear,
 Floating thro' an evening atmosphere,
 Grow golden all about the sky; 101
 In thee all passion becomes passionless,
 Touch'd by thy spirit's mellowness,
 Losing his fire and active might
 In a silent meditation,
 Falling into a still delight,
 And luxury of contemplation.
 As waves that up a quiet cove
 Rolling slide, and lying still
 Shadow forth the banks at will, 110
 Or sometimes they swell and move,
 Pressing up against the land
 With motions of the outer sea;
 And the self-same influence
 Controlleth all the soul and sense
 Of Passion gazing upon thee.
 His bow-string slacken'd, languid
 Love,
 Leaning his cheek upon his hand,
 Droops both his wings, regarding
 thee,
 And so would languish evermore, 120
 Serene, imperial Eleānore.

VIII

But when I see thee roam, with tresses
 unconfined,
 While the amorous odorous wind
 Breathes low between the sunset and
 the moon;
 Or, in a shadowy saloon,

On silken cushions half reclined;
I watch thy grace, and in its
place

My heart a charmed slumber keeps,
While I muse upon thy face;

And a languid fire creeps ¹³⁰
Thro' my veins to all my frame,
Dissolvingly and slowly. Soon

From thy rose-red lips my name
Floweth; and then, as in a swoon,
With dinning sound my ears are rife,

My tremulous tongue faltereth,
I lose my color, I lose my breath,
I drink the cup of a costly death,
Brimm'd with delirious draughts of
warmest life.

I die with my delight before ¹⁴⁰
I hear what I would hear from
thee;

Yet tell my name again to me,
I *would* be dying evermore,
So dying ever, *Eleânore*.

KATE

I know her by her angry air,
Her bright black eyes, her bright
black hair,

Her rapid laughter wild and shrill,
As laughter of the woodpecker
From the bosom of a hill.

'Tis Kate — she sayeth what she
will;

For Kate hath an unbridled tongue,
Clear as the twanging of a harp.

Her heart is like a throbbing star.

Kate hath a spirit ever strung
Like a new bow, and bright and
sharp

As edges of the scimitar.

Whence shall she take a fitting mate?

For Kate no common love will feel;

My woman-soldier, gallant Kate,
As pure and true as blades of steel.

Kate saith 'the world is void of might.'

Kate saith 'the men are gilded flies.'

Kate snaps her fingers at my vows;

Kate will not hear of lovers' sighs.

I would I were an armed knight,

Far-famed for well-won enterprise,

And wearing on my swarthy brows

The garland of new-wreathed em-
prise;

For in a moment I would pierce

The blackest files of clanging fight,
And strongly strike to left and right,
In dreaming of my lady's eyes.

O, Kate loves well the bold and
fierce;

But none are bold enough for Kate,
She cannot find a fitting mate.

'MY LIFE IS FULL OF WEARY DAYS'

My life is full of weary days,
But good things have not kept aloof,
Nor wander'd into other ways;
I have not lack'd thy mild reproof,
Nor golden largess of thy praise.

And now shake hands across the brink
Of that deep grave to which I go,
Shake hands once more; I cannot sink
So far — far down, but I shall know
Thy voice, and answer from below.

When in the darkness over me
The four-handed mole shall scrape,
Plant thou no dusky cypress-tree,
Nor wreathe thy cap with doleful
crape,
But pledge me in the flowing grape.

And when the sappy field and wood
Grow green beneath the showery
gray,

And rugged barks begin to bud,
And thro' damp holts new-flush'd
with may,
Ring sudden scritchings of the jay,

Then let wise Nature work her will,
And on my clay her darnel grow;
Come only, when the days are still,
And at my headstone whisper low,
And tell me if the woodbines blow.

EARLY SONNETS

I

TO —

As when with downcast eyes we muse
and brood,

And ebb into a former life, or seem
To lapse far back in some confused
dream

To states of mystical similitude,

If one but speaks or hems or stirs his chair,
 Ever the wonder waxeth more and more,
 So that we say, 'All this hath been before,
 All this hath been, I know not when or where;'
 So, friend, when first I look'd upon your face,
 Our thought gave answer each to each, so true —
 Opposed mirrors each reflecting each —
 That, tho' I knew not in what time or place,
 Methought that I had often met with you,
 And either lived in either's heart and speech.

II

TO J. M. K.

My hope and heart is with thee — thou wilt be
 A latter Luther, and a soldier-priest
 To scare church-harpies from the master's feast;
 Our dusted velvets have much need of thee:
 Thou art no Sabbath-drawler of old saws,
 Distill'd from some worm-canker'd homily;
 But spurr'd at heart with fieriest energy
 To embattail and to wall about thy cause
 With iron-worded proof, hating to hark
 The humming of the drowsy pulpit-drone
 Half God's good Sabbath, while the worn-out clerk
 Brow-beats his desk below. Thou from a throne
 Mounted in heaven wilt shoot into the dark
 Arrows of lightnings. I will stand and mark.

III

Mine be the strength of spirit, full and free,
 Like some broad river rushing down alone,

With the selfsame impulse wherewith he was thrown
 From his loud fount upon the echoing lea; —
 Which with increasing might doth forward flee
 By town, and tower, and hill, and cape, and isle,
 And in the middle of the green salt sea
 Keeps his blue waters fresh for many a mile.
 Mine be the power which ever to its sway
 Will win the wise at once, and by degrees
 May into uncongenial spirits flow;
 Even as the warm gulf-stream of Florida
 Floats far away into the Northern seas
 The lavish growths of southern Mexico.

IV

ALEXANDER

WARRIOR of God, whose strong right arm debased
 The throne of Persia, when her Satrap bled
 At Issus by the Syrian gates, or fled
 Beyond the Memmian naphtha-pits, disgraced
 For ever — thee (thy pathway sand-erased)
 Gliding with equal crowns two serpents led
 Joyful to that palm-planted fountain-fed
 Ammonian Oasis in the waste.
 There in a silent shade of laurel brown
 Apart the Chamian Oracle divine
 Shelter'd his unapproached mysteries:
 High things were spoken there, unhand'd down;
 Only they saw thee from the secret shrine
 Returning with hot cheek and kindled eyes.

V

BUONAPARTE

HE thought to quell the stubborn hearts of oak,
 Madman! — to chain with chains, and bind with bands

That island queen who sways the
floods and lands
From Ind to Ind, but in fair daylight
woke,
When from her wooden walls, — lit by
sure hands, —
With thunders, and with lightnings,
and with smoke, —
Peal after peal, the British battle
broke,
Lulling the brine against the Coptic
sands.
We taught him lowlier moods, when
Elsinore
Heard the war moan along the distant
sea,
Rocking with shatter'd spars, with
sudden fires
Flamed over; at Trafalgar yet once
more
We taught him; late he learned hu-
mility
Perforce, like those whom Gideon
school'd with briers.

VI

POLAND

How long, O God, shall men be ridden
down,
And trampled under by the last and
least
Of men? The heart of Poland hath
not ceased
To quiver, tho' her sacred blood doth
drown
The fields, and out of every smoulder-
ing town
Cries to Thee, lest brute Power be in-
creased,
Till that o'ergrown Barbarian in the
East
Transgress his ample bound to some
new crown, —
Cries to Thee, 'Lord, how long shall
these things be?
How long this icy-hearted Musco-
vite
Oppress the region?' Us, O Just and
Good,
Forgive, who smiled when she was
torn in three;
Us, who stand now, when we should
aid the right —
A matter to be wept with tears of
blood!

VII

CARESS'D or chidden by the slender
hand,
And singing airy trifles this or that,
Light Hope at Beauty's call would
perch and stand,
And run thro' every change of sharp
and flat;
And Fancy came and at her pillow sat,
When Sleep had bound her in his
rosy band,
And chased away the still-recurring
gnat,
And woke her with a lay from fairy
land.
But now they live with Beauty less
and less,
For Hope is other Hope and wanders
far,
Nor cares to lisp in love's delicious
creeds;
And Fancy watches in the wilderness,
Poor Fancy sadder than a single star,
That sets at twilight in a land of reeds.

VIII

THE form, the form alone is eloquent!
A nobler yearning never broke her rest
Than but to dance and sing, be gaily
drest,
And win all eyes with all accomplish-
ment;
Yet in the whirling dances as we went,
My fancy made me for a moment blest
To find my heart so near the beaute-
ous breast
That once had power to rob it of con-
tent.
A moment came the tenderness of
tears,
The phantom of a wish that once could
move,
A ghost of passion that no smiles re-
store —
For ah! the slight coquette, she can-
not love,
And if you kiss'd her feet a thousand
years,
She still would take the praise, and
care no more.

IX

WAN Sculptor, weepst thou to take
the cast
Of those dead lineaments that near
thee lie?

O, sorrowest thou, pale Painter, for
 the past,
 In painting some dead friend from
 memory ?
 Weep on ; beyond his object Love can
 last.
 His object lives ; more cause to weep
 have I :
 My tears, no tears of love, are flowing
 fast,
 No tears of love, but tears that Love
 can die.
 I pledge her not in any cheerful cup,
 Nor care to sit beside her where she
 sits —
 Ah ! pity — hint it not in human tones,
 But breathe it into earth and close it
 up
 With secret death for ever, in the
 pits
 Which some green Christmas crams
 with weary bones.

X

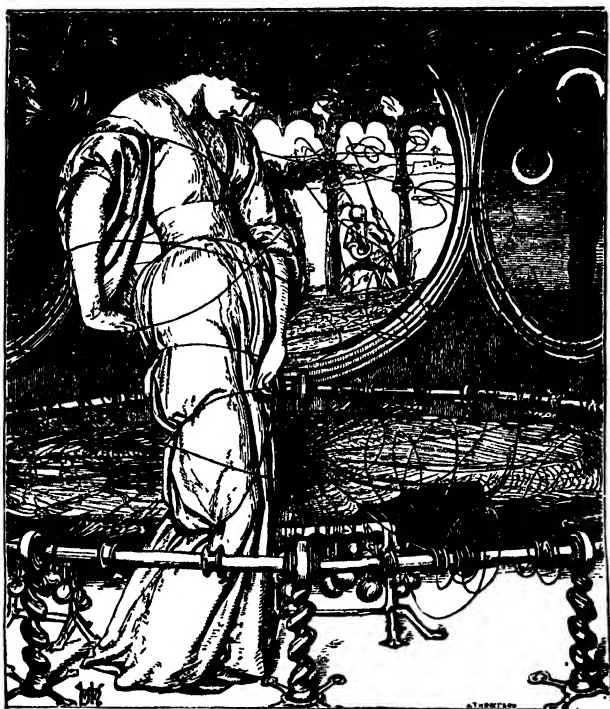
If I were loved, as I desire to be,
 What is there in the great sphere of
 the earth,
 And range of evil between death and
 birth,
 That I should fear, — if I were loved
 by thee ?
 All the inner, all the outer world of
 pain
 Clear Love would pierce and cleave,
 if thou wert mine,
 As I have heard that, somewhere in
 the main,
 Fresh-water springs come up through
 bitter brine.
 'T were joy, not fear, claspt hand-in-
 hand with thee,

To wait for death — mute — careless
 of all ills,
 Apart upon a mountain, tho' the
 surge
 Of some new deluge from a thousand
 hills
 Flung leagues of roaring foam into
 the gorge
 Below us, as far on as eye could see.

XI

THE BRIDESMAID

O BRIDESMAID, ere the happy knot
 was tied,
 Thine eyes so wept that they could
 hardly see ;
 Thy sister smiled and said, 'No tears
 for me !
 A happy bridesmaid makes a happy
 bride.'
 And then, the couple standing side by
 side,
 Love lighted down between them full
 of glee,
 And over his left shoulder laugh'd at
 thee,
 'O happy bridesmaid, make a happy
 bride.'
 And all at once a pleasant truth I
 learn'd,
 For while the tender service made
 thee weep,
 I loved thee for the tear thou couldst
 not hide,
 And prest thy hand, and knew the
 press return'd,
 And thought, 'My life is sick of single
 sleep :
 O happy bridesmaid, make a happy
 bride !'



"The curse is come upon me," cried
The Lady of Shalott,

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

AND OTHER POEMS

THE LADY OF SHALOTT

PART I

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the
sky ;
And thro' the field the road runs by
To many-tower'd Camelot ;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott.

Willows whiten, aspens quiver, 10
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Thro' the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four gray walls, and four gray towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott.

By the margin, willow-veil'd,
Slide the heavy barges trail'd 20
By slow horses; and unhail'd

The shallop fitteth silken-sail'd
 Skimming down to Camelot :
 But who hath seen her wave her hand?
 Or at the casement seen her stand?
 Or is she known in all the land,
 The Lady of Shalott?

Only reapers, reaping early
 In among the bearded barley,
 Hear a song that echoes cheerly 30
 From the river winding clearly,
 Down to tower'd Camelot;
 And by the moon the reaper weary,
 Piling sheaves in uplands airy,
 Listening, whispers 'T is the fairy
 Lady of Shalott.'

PART II

There she weaves by night and day
 A magic web with colors gay.
 She has heard a whisper say,
 A curse is on her if she stay 40
 To look down to Camelot.
 She knows not what the curse may be,
 And so she weaveth steadily,
 And little other care hath she,
 The Lady of Shalott.

And moving thro' a mirror clear
 That hangs before her all the year,
 Shadows of the world appear.
 There she sees the highway near
 Winding down to Camelot; 50
 There the river eddy whirls,
 And there the surly village-churls,
 And the red cloaks of market girls,
 Pass onward from Shalott.

Sometimes a troop of damsels glad,
 An abbot on an ambling pad,
 Sometimes a curly shepherd-lad,
 Or long-hair'd page in crimson clad,
 Goes by to tower'd Camelot;
 And sometimes thro' the mirror blue 60
 The knights come riding two and
 two:
 She hath no loyal knight and true,
 The Lady of Shalott.

But in her web she still delights
 To weave the mirror's magic sights,
 For often thro' the silent nights
 A funeral, with plumes and lights
 And music, went to Camelot;
 Or when the moon was overhead,
 Came two young lovers lately wed : 70

'I am half sick of shadows,' said
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART III

A bow-shot from her bower-eaves,
 He rode between the barley-sheaves,
 The sun came dazzling thro' the leaves,
 And flamed upon the brazen greaves
 Of bold Sir Lancelot.
 A red-cross knight for ever kneel'd
 To a lady in his shield,
 That sparkled on the yellow field, 80
 Beside remote Shalott.

The gemmy bridle glitter'd free,
 Like to some branch of stars we see
 Hung in the golden Galaxy.
 The bridle bells rang merrily
 As he rode down to Camelot;
 And from his blazon'd baldrick slung
 A mighty silver bugle hung,
 And as he rode his armor rung,
 Beside remote Shalott. 90

All in the blue unclouded weather
 Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-
 leather,
 The helmet and the helmet-feather
 Burn'd like one burning flame together,
 As he rode down to Camelot;
 As often thro' the purple night,
 Below the starry clusters bright,
 Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
 Moves over still Shalott.

His broad clear brow in sunlight
 glow'd; 100
 On burnish'd hooves his war-horse
 trode;
 From underneath his helmet flow'd
 His coal-black curls as on he rode,
 As he rode down to Camelot.
 From the bank and from the river
 He flash'd into the crystal mirror,
 'Tirra lirra,' by the river
 Sang Sir Lancelot.

She left the web, she left the loom, 109
 She made three paces thro' the room,
 She saw the water-lily bloom,
 She saw the helmet and the plume,
 She look'd down to Camelot.
 Out flew the web and floated wide;
 The mirror crack'd from side to side;
 'The curse is come upon me,' cried
 The Lady of Shalott.

PART IV

In the stormy east-wind straining,
The pale yellow woods were waning,
The broad stream in his banks complain-
ing, 120

Heavily the low sky raining
Over tower'd Camelot;
Down she came and found a boat
Beneath a willow left afloat,
And round about the prow she wrote
The Lady of Shalott.

And down the river's dim expanse
Like some bold seer in a trance,
Seeing all his own mischance —
With a glassy countenance 130

Did she look to Camelot.
And at the closing of the day
She loosed the chain, and down she
lay;
The broad stream bore her far away,
The Lady of Shalott.

Lying, robed in snowy white
That loosely flew to left and right —
The leaves upon her falling light —
Thro' the noises of the night
She floated down to Camelot;
And as the boat-head wound along 141
The willowy hills and fields among,
They heard her singing her last song,
The Lady of Shalott.

Heard a carol, mournful, holy,
Chanted loudly, chanted lowly,
Till her blood was frozen slowly,
And her eyes were darken'd wholly,
Turn'd to tower'd Camelot.
For ere she reach'd upon the tide 150
The first house by the water-side,
Singing in her song she died,
The Lady of Shalott.

Under tower and balcony,
By garden-wall and gallery,
A gleaming shape she floated by,
Dead-pale between the houses high,
Silent into Camelot.
Out upon the wharfs they came,
Knight and burgher, lord and dame,
And round the prow they read her
name, 161
The Lady of Shalott.

Who is this? and what is here?
And in the lighted palace near

Died the sound of royal cheer;
And they cross'd themselves for fear,
All the knights at Camelot:
But Lancelot mused a little space;
He said, 'She has a lovely face;
God in his mercy lend her grace, 170
The Lady of Shalott.'

MARIANA IN THE SOUTH

With one black shadow at its feet,
The house thro' all the level shines,
Close-latticed to the brooding heat,
And silent in its dusty vines;
A faint-blue ridge upon the right,
An empty river-bed before,
And shallows on a distant shore,
In glaring sand and inlets bright.
But 'Ave Mary,' made she moan,
And 'Ave Mary,' night and
morn, 18
And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all
alone,
To live forgotten, and love for-
lorn.'

She, as her carol sadder grew,
From brow and bosom slowly down
Thro' rosy taper fingers drew
Her streaming curls of deepest
brown

To left and right, and made appear
Still-lighted in a secret shrine
Her melancholy eyes divine,
The home of woe without a tear. 20
And 'Ave Mary,' was her moan,
'Madonna, sad is night and
morn,'
And 'Ah,' she sang, 'to be all
alone,
To live forgotten, and love for-
lorn.'

Till all the crimson changed, and
past
Into deep orange o'er the sea,
Low on her knees herself she cast,
Before Our Lady murmur'd she;
Complaining, 'Mother, give me grace
To help me of my weary load.' 30
And on the liquid mirror glow'd
The clear perfection of her face.
'Is this the form,' she made her
moan,
'That won his praises night and
morn?'

And 'Ah,' she said, 'but I wake
alone,
I sleep forgotten, I wake for-
lorn.'

Nor bird would sing, nor lamb would
bleat,

She breathed in sleep a lower
moan,
And murmuring, as at night
and morn,
She thought, 'My spirit is here
alone,
Walks forgotten, and is forlorn.'



'Low on her knees herself she cast,
Before Our Lady'

Nor any cloud would cross the
vault,
But day increased from heat to heat,
On stony drought and steaming
salt; 40
Till now at noon she slept again,
And seem'd knee-deep in mountain
grass,
And heard her native breezes pass,
And runlets babbling down the glen.

Dreaming, she knew it was a dream;
She felt he was and was not there. 50
She woke; the babble of the stream
Fell, and, without, the steady glare
Shrank one sick willow sere and
small.

The river-bed was dusty-white;
And all the furnace of the light
Struck up against the blinding wall.
She whisper'd, with a stifled moan

More inward than at night or
morn,
'Sweet Mother, let me not here
alone
Live forgotten and die forlorn.'

And, rising, from her bosom drew ⁶¹
Old letters, breathing of her worth,
For 'Love,' they said, 'must needs be
true,

To what is loveliest upon earth.'
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look at her with slight, and say
'But now thy beauty flows away,
So be alone for evermore.'

'O cruel heart,' she changed her
tone,
'And cruel love, whose end is
scorn, ⁷⁰
Is this the end, to be left alone,
To live forgotten, and die for-
lorn?'

But sometimes in the falling day
An image seem'd to pass the door,
To look into her eyes and say,
'But thou shalt be alone no more.'
And flaming downward over all
From heat to heat the day decreased,
And slowly rounded to the east
The one black shadow from the wall.

'The day to night,' she made her
moan, ⁸¹
'The day to night, the night to
morn,
And day and night I am left alone
To live forgotten, and love for-
lorn.'

At eve a dry cicala sung,
There came a sound as of the sea;
Backward the lattice-blind she flung,
And lean'd upon the balcony.
There all in spaces rosy-bright

Large Hesper glitter'd on her tears,
And deepening thro' the silent
spheres ⁹¹
Heaven over heaven rose the night.

And weeping then she made her
moan,
'The night comes on that knows
not morn,

When I shall cease to be all
alone,
To live forgotten, and love for-
lorn.'

THE TWO VOICES

A STILL small voice spake unto me,
'Thou art so full of misery,
Were it not better not to be?'

Then to the still small voice I said:
'Let me not cast in endless shade
What is so wonderfully made.'

To which the voice did urge reply:
'To-day I saw the dragon-fly
Come from the wells where he did lie.

'An inner impulse rent the veil ¹⁰
Of his old husk; from head to tail
Came out clear plates of sapphire mail.

'He dried his wings; like gauze they
grew;
Thro' crofts and pastures wet with dew
A living flash of light he flew.'

I said: 'When first the world began,
Young Nature thro' five cycles ran,
And in the sixth she moulded man.

'She gave him mind, the lordliest
Proportion, and, above the rest, ²⁰
Dominion in the head and breast.'

Thereto the silent voice replied:
'Self-blinded are you by your pride;
Look up thro' night; the world is wide.

'This truth within thy mind rehearse,
That in a boundless universe
Is boundless better, boundless worse.

'Think you this mould of hopes and
fears
Could find no statelier than his peers
In yonder hundred million spheres? ³⁰

It spake, moreover, in my mind:
'Tho' thou wert scatter'd to the wind,
Yet is there plenty of the kind.'

Then did my response clearer fall:
'No compound of this earthly ball
Is like another, all in all.'

To which he answer'd scoffingly:
'Good soul! suppose I grant it
thee,
Who'll weep for thy deficiency?'

'Or will one beam be less intense, 40
When thy peculiar difference
Is cancell'd in the world of sense?'

I would have said, 'Thou canst not
know,'
But my full heart, that work'd below,
Rain'd thro' my sight its overflow.

Again the voice spake unto me:
'Thou art so steep'd in misery,
Surely 't were better not to be.

'Thine anguish will not let thee sleep,
Nor any train of reason keep; 50
Thou canst not think, but thou wilt
weep.'

I said: 'The years with change ad-
vance;
If I make dark my countenance,
I shut my life from happier chance.

'Some turn this sickness yet might
take,
Even yet.' But he: 'What drug can
make
A wither'd palsy cease to shake?'

I wept: 'Tho' I should die, I know
That all about the thorn will blow
In tufts of rosy-tinted snow; 60

'And men, thro' novel spheres of
thought
Still moving after truth long sought,
Will learn new things when I am not.'

'Yet,' said the secret voice, 'some
time,
Sooner or later, will gray prime
Make thy grass hoar with early rime.

'Not less swift souls that yearn for
light,
Rapt after heaven's starry flight,
Would sweep the tracts of day and
night.

'Not less the bee would range her cells,
The furzy prickly fire the dells, 70
The foxglove cluster dappled bells.'

I said that 'all the years invent;
Each month is various to present
The world with some development.

'Were this not well, to bide mine
hour,
Tho' watching from a ruin'd tower
How grows the day of human power?'

'The highest-mounted mind,' he said,
'Still sees the sacred morning spread
The silent summit overhead. 80

'Will thirty seasons render plain
Those lonely lights that still remain,
Just breaking over land and main?

'Or make that morn, from his cold
crown
And crystal silence creeping down
Flood with full daylight glebe and
town?

'Forerun thy peers, thy time, and
let
Thy feet, millenniums hence, be set
In midst of knowledge, dream'd not
yet. 90

'Thou hast not gain'd a real height,
Nor art thou nearer to the light,
Because the scale is infinite.

'T were better not to breathe or speak,
Than cry for strength, remaining
weak,
And seem to find, but still to seek.

'Moreover, but to seem to find
Asks what thou lackest, thought
resign'd,
A healthy frame, a quiet mind.'

I said: 'When I am gone away, 100
'He dared not tarry,' men will say,
Doing dishonor to my clay.'

'This is more vile,' he made reply,
'To breathe and loathe, to live and
sigh,
Than once from dread of pain to die.

'Sick art thou — a divided will
Still heaping on the fear of ill
The fear of men, a coward still.

'Do men love thee? Art thou so
bound
To men that how thy name may sound
Will vex thee lying underground? 110

'The memory of the wither'd leaf
In endless time is scarce more brief
Than of the garner'd autumn-sheaf.

'Go, vexed spirit, sleep in trust;
The right ear that is fill'd with dust
Hears little of the false or just.'

'Hard task, to pluck resolve,' I cried,
'From emptiness and the waste wide
Of that abyss, or scornful pride! 120

'Nay — rather yet that I could raise
One hope that warm'd me in the days
While still I yearn'd for human praise.

'When, wide in soul and bold of
tongue,
Among the tents I paused and sung,
The distant battle flash'd and rung.

'I sung the joyful Pæan clear,
And, sitting, burnish'd without fear
The brand, the buckler, and the
spear —

'Waiting to strive a happy strife, 130
To war with falsehood to the knife,
And not to lose the good of life —

'Some hidden principle to move,
To put together, part and prove,
And mete the bounds of hate and
love —

'As far as might be, to carve out
Free space for every human doubt,
That the whole mind might orb
about —

'To search thro' all I felt or saw,
The springs of life, the depths of awe,
And reach the law within the law; 141

'At least, not rotting like a weed,
But, having sown some generous seed,
Fruitful of further thought and deed,

'To pass, when Life her light with-
draws,
Not void of righteous self-applause,
Nor in a merely selfish cause —

'In some good cause, not in mine own,
To perish, wept for, honor'd, known,
And like a warrior overthrown; 150

'Whose eyes are dim with glorious
tears,
When, soil'd with noble dust, he
hears
His country's war-song thrill his ears :

'Then dying of a mortal stroke,
What time the foeman's line is broke
And all the war is roll'd in smoke.'

'Yea!' said the voice, 'thy dream was
good,
While thou abodest in the bud.
It was the stirring of the blood.

'If Nature put not forth her power
About the opening of the flower, 16
Who is it that could live an hour?

'Then comes the check, the change,
the fall,
Pain rises up, old pleasures pall.
There is one remedy for all.

'Yet hadst thou, thro' enduring pain,
Link'd month to month with such a
chain
Of knitted purport, all were vain.

'Thou hadst not between death and
birth
Dissolved the riddle of the earth. 170
So were thy labor little worth.

'That men with knowledge merely
play'd,
I told thee — hardly nigher made,
Tho' scaling slow from grade to grade;

'Much less this dreamer, deaf and
blind,
Named man, may hope some truth to
find,
That bears relation to the mind.

'For every worm beneath the moon
Draws different threads, and late and
soon
Spins, toiling out his own cocoon. 180

'Cry, faint not: either Truth is born
Beyond the polar gleam forlorn,
Or in the gateways of the morn.

'Cry, faint not, climb: the summits
slope

Beyond the furthest flights of hope,
Wrapt in dense cloud from base to
cope.

'Sometimes a little corner shines,
As over rainy mist inclines
A gleaming crag with belts of pines.

'I will go forward, sayest thou, 190
I shall not fail to find her now.
Look up, the fold is on her brow.

'If straight thy track, or if oblique,
Thou know'st not. Shadows thou dost
strike,
Embracing cloud, Ixion-like ;

'And owning but a little more
Than beasts, abidest lame and poor,
Calling thyself a little lower

'Than angels. Cease to wail and
brawl !
Why inch by inch to darkness crawl ?
There is one remedy for all.' 201

'O dull, one-sided voice,' said I,
'Wilt thou make everything a lie,
To flatter me that I may die ?

'I know that age to age succeeds,
Blowing a noise of tongues and
deeds,
A dust of systems and of creeds.

'I cannot hide that some have striven,
Achieving calm, to whom was given
The joy that mixes man with Heaven ;

'Who, rowing hard against the
stream, 211
Saw distant gates of Eden gleam,
And did not dream it was a dream ;

'But heard, by secret transport led,
Even in the charnels of the dead,
The murmur of the fountain-head —

'Which did accomplish their desire,
Bore and forebore, and did not tire,
Like Stephen, an unquenched fire.

'He heeded not reviling tones, 220
Nor sold his heart to idle moans,
Tho' cursed and scorn'd, and bruised
with stones ;

'But looking upward, full of grace,
He pray'd, and from a happy place
God's glory smote him on the face.'

The sullen answer slid betwixt :
'Not that the grounds of hope were
fix'd,
The elements were kindlier mix'd.'

I said : 'I toil beneath the curse,
But, knowing not the universe, 230
I fear to slide from bad to worse ;

'And that, in seeking to undo
One riddle, and to find the true,
I knit a hundred others new ;

'Or that this anguish fleeting hence,
Unmanacled from bonds of sense,
Be fix'd and frozen to permanence :

'For I go, weak from suffering here ;
Naked I go, and void of cheer :
What is it that I may not fear ?' 240

'Consider well,' the voice replied,
'His face, that two hours since hath
died ;
Wilt thou find passion, pain or pride ?

'Will he obey when one commands ?
Or answer should one press his hands ?
He answers not, nor understands.

'His palms are folded on his breast ;
There is no other thing express'd
But long disquiet merged in rest.

'His lips are very mild and meek ; 250
Tho' one should smite him on the
cheek,
And on the mouth, he will not speak.

'His little daughter, whose sweet face
He kiss'd, taking his last embrace,
Becomes dishonor to her race —

'His sons grow up that bear his
name,
Some grow to honor, some to shame,—
But he is chill to praise or blame.

'He will not hear the north-wind rave,
Nor, moaning, household shelter
crave 260
From winter rains that beat his grave.

'High up the vapors fold and swim ;
About him broods the twilight dim ;
The place he knew forgetteth him.'

'If all be dark, vague voice,' I said,
'These things are wrapt in doubt and
dread,
Nor canst thou show the dead are
dead.

'The sap dries up ; the plant de-
clines.
A deeper tale my heart divines.
Know I not death ? the outward
signs ?

270

'I found him when my years were
few ;
A shadow on the graves I knew,
And darkness in the village yew.

'From grave to grave the shadow
crept ;
In her still place the morning wept ;
Touch'd by his feet the daisy slept.

'The simple senses crown'd his head :
"Omega ! thou art Lord," they said,
"We find no motion in the dead !"

'Why, if man rot in dreamless ease, 280
Should that plain fact, as taught by
these,
Not make him sure that he shall
cease ?

'Who forged that other influence,
That heat of inward evidence,
By which he doubts against the
sense ?

'He owns the fatal gift of eyes,
That read his spirit blindly wise,
Not simple as a thing that dies.

'Here sits he shaping wings to fly ;
His heart forebodes a mystery ; 290
He names the name Eternity.

'That type of Perfect in his mind
In Nature can he nowhere find.
He sows himself on every wind.

'He seems to hear a Heavenly Friend,
And thro' thick veils to apprehend
A labor working to an end.

'The end and the beginning vex
His reason : many things perplex,
With motions, checks, and counter
checks.

300

'He knows a baseness in his blood
At such strange war with something
good,
He may not do the thing he would.

'Heaven opens inward, chasms yawn
Vast images in glimmering dawn,
Half shown, are broken and with-
drawn.

'Ah ! sure within him and without,
Could his dark wisdom find it out,
There must be answer to his doubt,

'But thou canst answer not again. 310
With thine own weapon art thou
slain,
Or thou wilt answer but in vain.

'The doubt would rest, I dare not
solve.
In the same circle we revolve.
Assurance only breeds resolve.'

As when a billow, blown against,
Falls back, the voice with which I
fenced
A little ceased, but recommenced :

'Where wert thou when thy father
play'd
In his free field, and pastime made, 320
A merry boy in sun and shade ?

'A merry boy they call'd him then,
He sat upon the knees of men
In days that never come again ;

'Before the little ducts began
To feed thy bones with lime, and
ran
Their course, till thou wert also man :

'Who took a wife, who rear'd his race,
Whose wrinkles gather'd on his face,
Whose troubles number with his
days ;

330

'A life of nothings, nothing worth,
From that first nothing ere his birth
To that last nothing under earth !'

'These words,' I said, 'are like the
rest;
No certain clearness, but at best
A vague suspicion of the breast:

'But if I grant, thou mightst defend
The thesis which thy words intend —
That to begin implies to end ;

'Yet how should I for certain hold, 340
Because my memory is so cold,
That I first was in human mould ?

'I cannot make this matter plain,
But I would shoot, howe'er in vain,
A random arrow from the brain.

'It may be that no life is found,
Which only to one engine bound
Falls off, but cycles always round.

'As old mythologies relate,
Some draught of Lethe might await 350
The slipping thro' from state to
state ;

'As here we find in trances, men
Forget the dream that happens then,
Until they fall in trance again ;

'So might we, if our state were such
As one before, remember much,
For those two likes might meet and
touch.

'But, if I lapsed from nobler place,
Some legend of a fallen race
Alone might hint of my disgrace ; 360

'Some vague emotion of delight
In gazing up an Alpine height,
Some yearning toward the lamps of
night ;

'Or if thro' lower lives I came —
Tho' all experience past became
Consolidate in mind and frame —

'I might forget my weaker lot ;
For is not our first year forgot ?
The haunts of memory echo not.

'And men, whose reason long was
blind, 370
From cells of madness unconfined,
Oft lose whole years of darker mind.

'Much more, if first I floated free,
As naked essence, must I be
Incompetent of memory ;

'For memory dealing but with time,
And he with matter, could she climb
Beyond her own material prime ?

'Moreover, something is or seems,
That touches me with mystic
gleams, 380
Like glimpses of forgotten dreams —

'Of something felt, like something
here ;
Of something done, I know not where ;
Such as no language may declare.'

The still voice laugh'd. 'I talk,' said
he,
'Not with thy dreams. Suffice it thee
Thy pain is a reality.'

'But thou,' said I, 'hast missed thy
mark,
Who sought'st to wreck my mortal
ark,
By making all the horizon dark. 390

'Why not set forth, if I should do
This rashness, that which might en-
sue
With this old soul in organs new ?

'Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
No life that breathes with human
breath
Has ever truly long'd for death.

'Tis life, whereof our nerves are
scant,
O, life, not death, for which we pant ;
More life, and fuller, that I want.'

I ceased, and sat as one forlorn. 400
Then said the voice, in quiet scorn
'Behold, it is the Sabbath morn.'

And I arose, and I released
The casement, and the light increased
With freshness in the dawning east.

Like soften'd airs that blowing steal,
When meres begin to uncongeal,
The sweet church bells began to
peal.

On to God's house the people prest ;
 Passing the place where each must
 rest, ⁴¹⁰
 Each enter'd like a welcome guest.

One walk'd between his wife and child,
 With measured footfall firm and mild,
 And now and then he gravely smiled.

The prudent partner of his blood
 Lean'd on him, faithful, gentle, good,
 Wearing the rose of womanhood.

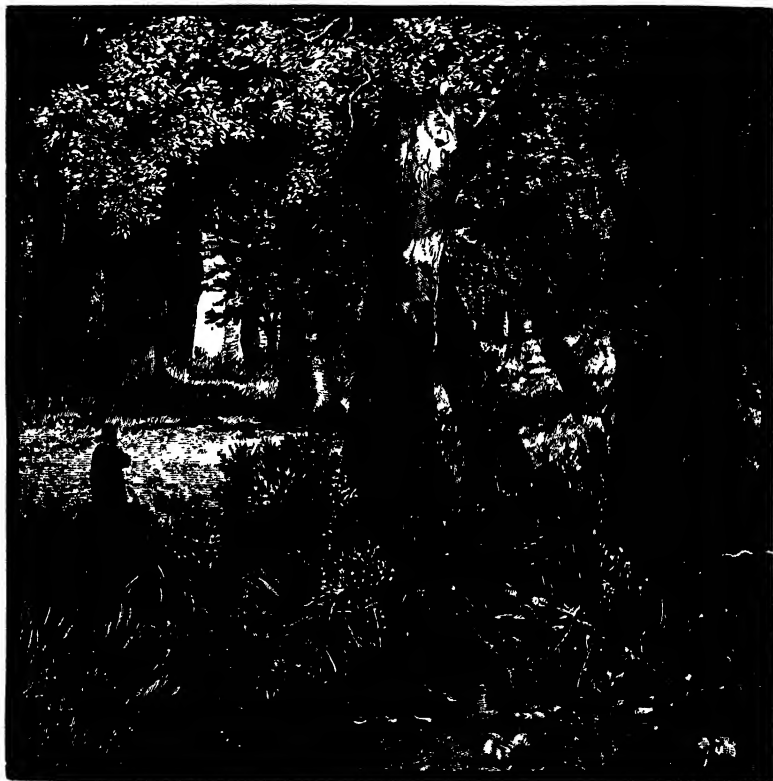
And in their double love secure,
 The little maiden walk'd demure,
 Pacing with downward eyelids pure.

These three made unity so sweet, ⁴²¹
 My frozen heart began to beat,
 Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wander'd on ;
 I spoke, but answer came there
 none ;
 The dull and bitter voice was gone.

A second voice was at mine ear,
 A little whisper silver-clear,
 A murmur, ' Be of better cheer.'

As from some blissful neighborhood,
 A notice faintly understood, ⁴³¹
 ' I see the end, and know the good.'



' I wonder'd, while I paced along ;
 The woods were fill'd so full with song '

A little hint to solace woe,
A hint, a whisper breathing low,
'I may not speak of what I know.'

Like an Æolian harp that wakes
No certain air, but overtakes
Far thought with music that it makes ;

Such seem'd the whisper at my side ·
'What is it thou knowest, sweet
voice?' I cried. 440
'A hidden hope,' the voice replied ;

So heavenly-toned, that in that hour
From out my sullen heart a power
Broke, like the rainbow from the
shower,

To feel, altho' no tongue can prove,
That every cloud, that spreads above
And veileth love, itself is love.

And forth into the fields I went,
And Nature's living motion lent
The pulse of hope to discontent. 450

I wonder'd at the bounteous hours,
The slow result of winter showers ;
You scarce could see the grass for
flowers.

I wonder'd, while I paced along ;
The woods were fill'd so full with song,
There seem'd no room for sense of
wrong ;

And all so variously wrought,
I marvell'd how the mind was brought
To anchor by one gloomy thought ;

And wherefore rather I made choice 460
To commune with that barren voice,
Than him that said, 'Rejoice! Re-
joice!'

THE MILLER'S DAUGHTER

I SEE the wealthy miller yet,
His double chin, his portly size,
And who that knew him could forget
The busy wrinkles round his eyes ?
The slow wise smile that, round about
His dusty forehead drily curl'd,
Seem'd half-within and half-without,
And full of dealings with the world ?

In yonder chair I see him sit,
Three fingers round the old silver
cup — 10

I see his gray eyes twinkle yet
At his own jest — gray eyes lit up
With summer lightnings of a soul
So full of summer warmth, so glad,
So healthy, sound, and clear and whole,
His memory scarce can make me
sad.

Yet fill my glass ; give me one kiss :
My own sweet Alice, we must die.
There's somewhat in this world amiss
Shall be unriddled by and by. 20
There's somewhat flows to us in life,
But more is taken quite away.
Pray, Alice, pray, my darling wife,
That we may die the self-same day.

Have I not found a happy earth ?
I least should breathe a thought of
pain.

Would God renew me from my birth,
I'd almost live my life again ;
So sweet it seems with thee to walk,
And once again to woo thee mine —
It seems in after-dinner talk 31
Across the walnuts and the wine —

To be the long and listless boy
Late-left an orphan of the squire,
Where this old mansion mounted high
Looks down upon the village spire ;
For even here, where I and you
Have lived and loved alone so long,
Each morn my sleep was broken thro'
By some wild skylark's matin song.

And oft I heard the tender dove 41
In firry woodlands making moan ;
But ere I saw your eyes, my love,
I had no motion of my own.

For scarce my life with fancy play'd
Before I dream'd that pleasant
dream —

Still hither thither idly sway'd
Like those long mosses in the stream.

Or from the bridge I lean'd to hear
The milldam rushing down with
noise, 50

And see the minnows everywhere
In crystal eddies glance and poise,
The tall flag-flowers when they sprung
Below the range of stepping-stones,

Or those three chestnuts near, that hung
In masses thick with milky cones.

But, Alice, what an hour was that,
When after roving in the woods
(‘T was April then), I came and sat
Below the chestnuts, when their buds
Were glistening to the breezy blue, ⁶¹
And on the slope, an absent fool,
I cast me down, nor thought of you,
But angled in the higher pool.

A love-song I had somewhere read,
An echo from a measured strain,
Beat time to nothing in my head
From some odd corner of the brain.
It haunted me, the morning long,
With weary sameness in the rhymes,
The phantom of a silent song, ⁷¹
That went and came a thousand
times.

Then leapt a trout. In lazy mood
I watch’d the little circles die;
They past into the level flood,
And there a vision caught my eye;
The reflex of a beauteous form,
A glowing arm, a gleaming neck,
As when a sunbeam wavers warm
Within the dark and dimpled beck.

For you remember, you had set, ⁸¹
That morning, on the casement-edge
A long green box of mignonette,
And you were leaning from the
ledge;
And when I raised my eyes, above
They met with two so full and
bright—
Such eyes! I swear to you, my love,
That these have never lost their
light.

I loved, and love dispell’d the fear
That I should die an early death; ⁹⁰
For love possess’d the atmosphere,
And fill’d the breast with purer
breath.
My mother thought, What ails the boy?
For I was alter’d, and began
To move about the house with joy,
And with the certain step of man.

I loved the brimming wave that swam
Thro’ quiet meadows round the mill,

The sleepy pool above the dam,
The pool beneath it never still, ¹⁰⁰
The meal-sacks on the whiten’d floor,
The dark round of the dripping
wheel,
The very air about the door
Made misty with the floating meal.

And oft in ramblings on the wold,
When April nights began to blow,
And April’s crescent glimmer’d cold,
I saw the village lights below;
I knew your taper far away,
And full at heart of trembling
hope, ¹¹⁰
From off the wold I came, and lay
Upon the freshly-flower’d slope.

The deep brook groan’d beneath the
mill;
And ‘by that lamp,’ I thought, ‘she
sits!’
The white chalk-quarry from the hill
(Gleam’d to the flying moon by fits.
‘O, that I were beside her now!
O, will she answer if I call?
O, would she give me vow for vow,
Sweet Alice, if I told her all?’ ¹²⁰

Sometimes I saw you sit and spin;
And, in the pauses of the wind,
Sometimes I heard you sing within;
Sometimes your shadow cross’d the
blind.
At last you rose and moved the light,
And the long shadow of the chair
Flitted across into the night,
And all the casement darken’d there.

But when at last I dared to speak,
The lanes, you know, were white
with may; ¹³⁰
Your ripe lips moved not, but your
cheek
Flush’d like the coming of the
day;
And so it was—half-sly, half-shy,
You would, and would not, little
one!
Although I pleaded tenderly,
And you and I were all alone.

And slowly was my mother brought
To yield consent to my desire: ¹³⁸
She wish’d me happy, but she thought
I might have look’d a little higher;



'And rose, and, with a silent grace
Approaching, press'd you heart to heart'

And I was young — too young to wed:
'Yet must I love her for your sake;
Go fetch your Alice here,' she said:
Her eyelid quiver'd as she spake.

And down I went to fetch my bride:
But, Alice, you were ill at ease;
This dress and that by turns you tried,
Too fearful that you should not
please.

I loved you better for your fears,
I knew you could not look but well;
And dews, that would have fallen in
tears, 151
I kiss'd away before they fell.

I watch'd the little flutterings,
The doubt my mother would not see;

She spoke at large of many things,
And at the last she spoke of
me;
And turning look'd upon your face,
As near this door you sat apart,
And rose, and, with a silent grace
Approaching, press'd you heart to
heart. 160

Ah, well — but sing the foolish song
I gave you, Alice, on the day
When, arm in arm, we went along,
A pensive pair, and you were gay
With bridal flowers — that I may seem,
As in the nights of old, to lie
Beside the mill-wheel in the stream,
While those full chestnuts whisper
by.

It is the miller's daughter,
And she is grown so dear, so dear,
That I would be the jewel ¹⁷¹
That trembles in her ear;
For hid in ringlets day and night,
I'd touch her neck so warm and white.

And I would be the girdle
About her dainty dainty waist,
And her heart would beat against me,
In sorrow and in rest;
And I should know if it beat right,
I'd clasp it round so close and tight.

And I would be the necklace, ¹⁸¹
And all day long to fall and rise
Upon her balmy bosom,
With her laughter or her sighs;
And I would lie so light, so light,
I scarce should be unclasp'd at night.

A trifle, sweet! which true love spells—
True love interprets—right alone.

His light upon the letter dwells,
For all the spirit is his own. ¹⁹⁰

So, if I waste words now, in truth
You must blame Love. His early
rage

Had force to make me rhyme in youth,
And makes me talk too much in age.

And now those vivid hours are gone,
Like mine own life to me thou art,
Where Past and Present, wound in one,
Do make a garland for the heart;
So sing that other song I made,
Half-anger'd with my happy lot, ²⁰⁰
The day, when in the chestnut shade
I found the blue forget-me-not.

Love that hath us in the net,
Can he pass, and we forget?
Many suns arise and set;
Many a chance the years beget;
Love the gift is Love the debt.
Even so.

Love is hurt with jar and fret;
Love is made a vague regret; ²¹⁰
Eyes with idle tears are wet;
Idle habit links us yet.
What is love? for we forget:
Ah, no! no!

Look thro' mine eyes with thine. True
wife,

Round my true heart thine arms
entwine;

My other dearer life in life,
Look thro' my very soul with thine!
Untouch'd with any shade of years,
May those kind eyes for ever dwell!

They have not shed a many tears, ²²¹
Dear eyes, since first I knew them
well.

Yet tears they shed; they had their
part

Of sorrow; for when time was
ripe,

The still affection of the heart
Became an outward breathing type,
That into stillness past again,

And left a want unknown before;
Although the loss had brought us
pain,

That loss but made us love the
more, ²³⁰

With farther lookings on. The kiss,
The woven arms, seem but to be

Weak symbols of the settled bliss,
The comfort, I have found in thee;

But that God bless thee, dear—who
wrought

Two spirits to one equal mind—
With blessings beyond hope or thought,

With blessings which no words can
find.

Arise, and let us wander forth
To yon old mill across the wolds; ²⁴⁰

For look, the sunset, south and north,
Winds all the vale in rosy folds,

And fires your narrow casement glass,
Touching the sullen pool below;

On the chalk-hill the bearded grass
Is dry and dewless. Let us go.

FATIMA

O LOVE, Love, Love! O withering
might!

O sun, that from thy noonday height
Shudderest when I strain my sight,

Throbbing thro' all thy heat and light.
Lo, falling from my constant mind,

Lo, parch'd and wither'd, deaf and
blind,

I whirl like leaves in roaring wind.

Last night I wasted hateful hours
Below the city's eastern towers;

I thirsted for the brooks, the showers;
I roll'd among the tender flowers;

I crush'd them on my breast, my
mouth;

I look'd athwart the burning drouth
Of that long desert to the south.

Last night, when some one spoke his
name,
From my swift blood that went and
came
A thousand little shafts of flame
Were shiver'd in my narrow frame.
O Love, O fire! once he drew
With one long kiss my whole soul
thro'
My lips, as sunlight drinketh dew.

Before he mounts the hill, I know
He cometh quickly; from below
Sweet gales, as from deep gardens,
blow
Before him, striking on my brow.
In my dry brain my spirit soon,
Down-deepening from swoon to
swoon,
Faints like a dazzled morning moon.

The wind sounds like a silver wire,
And from beyond the noon a fire
Is pour'd upon the hills, and nigher
The skies stoop down in their desire;
And, isled in sudden seas of light,
My heart, pierced thro' with fierce
delight,
Bursts into blossom in his sight.

My whole soul waiting silently,
All naked in a sultry sky,
Droops blinded with his shining eye;
I *will* possess him or will die.
I will grow round him in his place,
Grow, live, die looking on his face,
Die, dying clasp'd in his embrace.

CENONE

THERE lies a vale in Ida, lovelier
Than all the valleys of Ionian hills.
The swimming vapor slopes athwart
the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from
pine to pine,
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either
hand
The lawns and meadow-ledges mid-
way down
Hang rich in flowers, and far below
them roars

The long brook falling thro' the cloven
ravine

In cataract after cataract to the sea.
Behind the valley topmost Gargarus
Stands up and takes the morning; but
in front

The gorges, opening wide apart, re-
veal

Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel,
The crown of Troas.

Hither came at noon
Mournful CENONE, wandering forlorn
Of Paris, once her playmate on the
hills.

Her cheek had lost the rose, and round
her neck

Floated her hair or seem'd to float in
rest.

She, leaning on a fragment twined
with vine,

Sang to the stillness, till the moun-
tain-shade

Sloped downward to her seat from the
upper cliff.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
For now the noonday quiet holds the
bill;

The grasshopper is silent in the grass;
The lizard, with his shadow on the
stone,

Rests like a shadow, and the winds are
dead.

The purple flower droops, the golden
bee

Is lily-cradled; I alone awake.

My eyes are full of tears, my heart of
love,

My heart is breaking, and my eyes
are dim,

And I am all aware of my life.

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.

Hear me, O earth, hear me, O hills, O
caves

That house the cold crown'd snake!
O mountain brooks,

I am the daughter of a River-God,

Hear me, for I will speak, and build
up all

My sorrow with my song, as yonder
walls

Rose slowly to a music slowly
breathed,

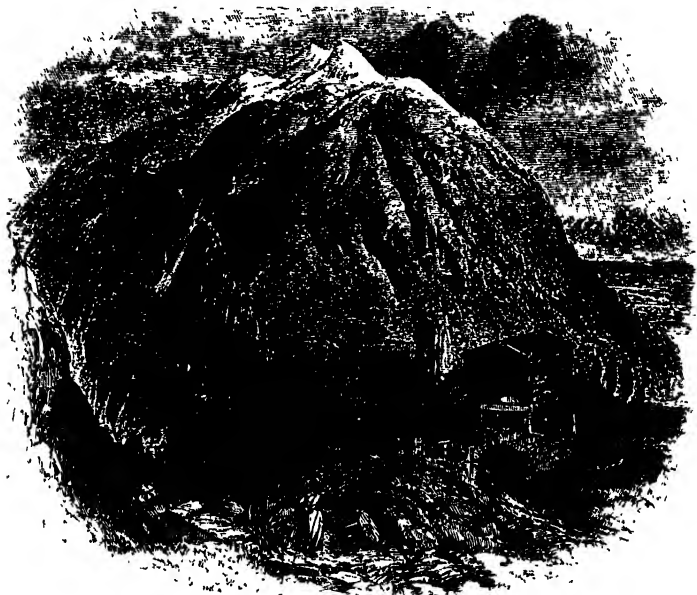
A cloud that gather'd shape ; for it
 may be
 That, while I speak of it, a little
 while
 My heart may wander from its deeper
 woe.

'O mother Ida, many - fountain'd
 Ida,
 Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 I waited underneath the dawning hills;
 Aloft the mountain lawn was dewy-
 dark,
 And dewy-dark aloft the mountain
 pine.
 Beautiful Paris, evil-hearted Paris,
 Leading a jet-black goat white-horn'd,
 white-hooved,
 Came up from reedy Simois all alone.⁵⁰

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 Far-off the torrent call'd me from the
 cleft ;

Far up the solitary morning smote
 The streaks of virgin snow. With
 down-dropt eyes
 I sat alone ; white-breasted like a
 star
 Fronting the dawn he moved ; a leo-
 pard skin
 Droop'd from his shoulder, but his
 sunny hair
 Cluster'd about his temples like a
 God's ;
 And his cheek brighten'd as the foam
 bow brightens⁶⁰
 When the wind blows the foam, and
 all my heart
 Went forth to embrace him coming
 ere he came.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
 He smiled, and opening out his milk-
 white palm
 Disclosed a fruit of pure Hesperian
 gold,



'Troas and Ilion's column'd citadel'

That smelt ambrosially, and while I
look'd
And listen'd, the full-flowing river of
speech
Came down upon my heart :
"My own Cenone,
Beautiful-brow'd Cenone, my own soul,
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind
ingraven 70
'For the most fair,' would seem to
award it thine,
As lovelier than whatever Orcad haunt
The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all
grace
Of movement, and the charm of mar-
ried brows."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
He prest the blossom of his lips to
mine,
And added, "This was cast upon the
board,
When all the full-faced presence of
the Gods
Ranged in the halls of Peleus ; where-
upon
Rose feud, with question unto whom
't were due ; 80
But light-foot Iris brought it yester-
eve,
Delivering, that to me, by common
voice
Elected umpire, Herè comes to-day,
Pallas and Aphrodite, claiming each
This meed of fairest. Thou, within
the cave
Behind yon whispering tuft of oldest
pine,
Mayst well behold them unbeheld,
unheard
Hear all, and see thy Paris judge of
Gods."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
It was the deep midnoon ; one silvery
cloud 90
Had lost his way between the piny
sides
Of this long glen. Then to the bower
they came,
Naked they came to that smooth-
swarded bower,
And at their feet the crocus brake like
fire,
Violet, amaracus, and asphodel,
Lotos and lilies ; and a wind arose,

And overhead the wandering ivy and
vine,
This way and that, in many a wild
festoon
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled
boughs
With bunch and berry and flower thro'
and thro'. 100

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
On the tree-tops a crested peacock
lit,
And o'er him flow'd a golden cloud,
and leun'd
Upon him, slowly dropping fragrant
dew.
Then first I heard the voice of her to
whom
(Coming thro' heaven, like a light that
grows
Larger and clearer, with one mind the
Gods
Rise up for reverence. She to Paris
made
Proffer of royal power, ample rule
Unquestion'd, overflowing revenue 110
Wherewith to embellish state, "from
many a vale
And river-sunder'd champaign clothed
with corn,
Or labor'd mine undrainable of ore.
Honor," she said, "and homage, tax
and toll,
From many an inland town and haven
large,
Mast-throng'd beneath her shadowing
citadel
In glassy bays among her tallest
towers."

'O mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Still she spake on and still she spake
of power,
"Which in all action is the end of
all ; 120
Power fitted to the season ; wisdom-
bred
And throned of wisdom—from all
neighbor crowns
Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand
Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon
from me,
From me, heaven's queen, Paris, to
thee king-born,
A shepherd all thy life but yet king
born,

Should come most welcome, seeing
men, in power
Only, are likest Gods, who have attain'd
Rest in a happy place and quiet seats
Above the thunder, with undying
bliss¹³⁰
In knowledge of their own supremacy."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She ceased, and Paris held the costly
fruit
Out at arm's-length, so much the
thought of power
Flatter'd his spirit; but Pallas where
she stood
Somewhat apart, her clear and bared
limbs
O'erthwarted with the brazen-headed
spear
Upon her pearly shoulder leaning cold,
The while, above, her full and earnest
eye
Over her snow-cold breast and angry
cheek¹⁴⁰
Kept watch, waiting decision, made
reply:

"Self-reverence, self-knowledge,
self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign
power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncall'd for) but to live
by law,
Acting the law we live by without
fear;
And, because right is right, to follow
right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence."

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Again she said: "I woo thee not with
gifts."¹⁵⁰
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I
am,
So shalt thou find me fairest.
Yet, indeed,
If gazing on divinity disrobed
Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of
fair,
Unbias'd by self-profit, O, rest thee
sure

That I shall love thee well and cleave
to thee,
So that my vigor, wedded to thy
blood,
Shall strike within thy pulses, like a
God's,
To push thee forward thro' a life of
shocks,¹⁶⁰
Dangers, and deeds, until endurance
grow
Sinew'd with action, and the full-
grown will,
Circled thro' all experiences, pure law,
Commensure perfect freedom."
Here she ceas'd,
And Paris ponder'd, and I cried, "O
Paris,
Give it to Pallas!" but he heard me
not,
Or hearing would not hear me, woe is
me!

'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,
Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Idalian Aphrodite beautiful,¹⁷⁰
Fresh as the foam, new-bathed in Paphian
wells,
With rosy slender fingers backward
drew
From her warm brows and bosom her
deep hair
Ambrosial, golden round her lucid
throat
And shoulder; from the violets her
light foot
Shone rosy-white, and o'er her rounded
form
Between the shadows of the vine-
bunches
Floated the glowing sunlights, as she
moved.

'Dear mother Ida, harken ere I die.
She with a subtle smile in her mild
eyes,¹⁸⁰
The herald of her triumph, drawing
nigh
Half-whisper'd in his ear, "I promise
thee
The fairest and most loving wife in
Greece."
She spoke and laugh'd; I shut my
sight for fear;
But when I look'd, Paris had raised
his arm,
And I beheld great Herë's angry eyes.

As she withdrew into the golden cloud,
And I was left alone within the bower ;
And from that time to this I am alone,
And I shall be alone until I die. 190

‘ Yet, mother Ida, harken ere I die.
Fairest — why fairest wife ? am I not
fair ?

My love hath told me so a thousand
times.

Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,
When I past by, a wild and wanton
pard,

Eyed like the evening star, with play-
ful tail

Crouch’d fawning in the weed. Most
loving is she ?

Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that
my arms

Were wound about thee, and my hot
lips prest

Close, close to thine in that quick-fall-
ing dew 200

Of fruitful kisses, thick as autumn
rains

Flash in the pools of whirling Simois !

‘ O mother, hear me yet before I die.
They came, they cut away my tallest
pines,

My tall dark pines, that plumed the
craggy ledge

High over the blue gorge, and all be-
tween

The snowy peak and snow-white cata-
ract

Foster’d the callow eaglet — from be-
neath

Whose thick mysterious boughs in the
dark morn

The panther’s roar came muffled, while
I sat 210

Low in the valley. Never, never more
Shall lone Enone see the morning mist
Sweep thro’ them ; never see them
overlaid

With narrow moonlit slips of silver
cloud,

Between the loud stream and the
trembling stars.

‘ O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I wish that somewhere in the ruin’d
folds,

Among the fragments tumbled from
the glens,

Or the dry thickets, I could meet with
her

The Abominable, that uninvited came
Into the fair Peleñan banquet-hall, 221
And cast the golden fruit upon the
board,

And bred this change ; that I might
speak my mind,

And tell her to her face how much I
hate

Her presence, hated both of Gods and
men.

‘ O mother, hear me yet before I
die.

Hath he not sworn his love a thousand
times,

In this green valley, under this green
hill,

Even on this hand, and sitting on this
stone ?

Seal’d it with kisses ? water’d it with
tears ? 230

O happy tears, and how unlike to
these !

O happy heaven, how canst thou see
my face ?

O happy earth, how canst thou bear
my weight ?

O death, death, death, thou ever-float-
ing cloud,

There are enough unhappy on this
earth,

Pass by the happy souls, that love to
live ;

I pray thee, pass before my light of
life,

And shadow all my soul, that I may
die.

Thou weightiest heavy on the heart
within,

Weigh heavy on my eyelids ; let me
die. 240

‘ O mother, hear me yet before I die.
I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts
Do shape themselves within me, more
and more,

Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear
Dead sounds at night come from the
inmost hills,

Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly
see

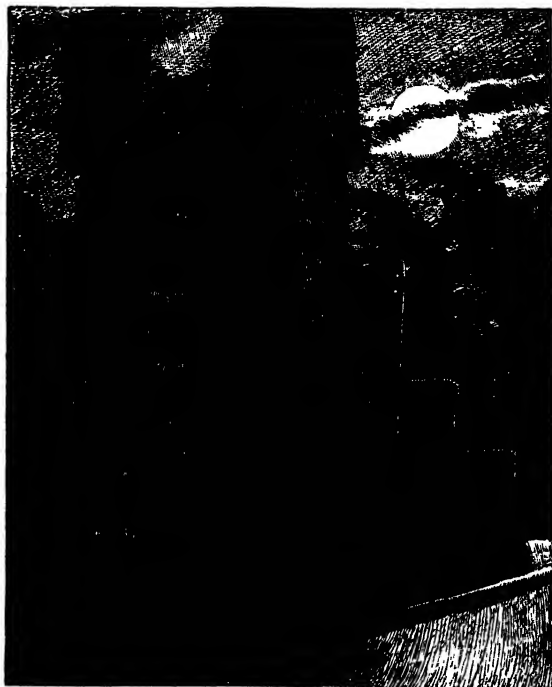
My far-off doubtful purpose, as a
mother

Conjectures of the features of her child

Ere it is born. Her child!—a shudder comes
 Across me: never child be born of me,
 Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!

251

What this may be I know not, but I know
 That, wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
 All earth and air seem only burning fire.'



'The wind is blowing in turret and tree'

'O mother, hear me yet before I die.
 Hear me, O earth. I will not die alone.
 Lest their shrill happy laughter come to me
 Walking the cold and starless road of death
 Uncomforted, leaving my ancient love
 With the Greek woman. I will rise and go
 Down into Troy, and ere the stars come forth
 Talk with the wild Cassandra, for she says
 A fire dances before her, and a sound
 Rings ever in her ears of armed men.

259

THE SISTERS

WE were two daughters of one race;
 She was the fairest in the face.

The wind is blowing in turret and tree.

They were together, and she fell;
 Therefore revenge became me well.

O, the earl was fair to see!

She died; she went to burning flame;
 She mix'd her ancient blood with shame.

The wind is howling in turret and tree.

Whole weeks and months, and early
and late,
To win his love I lay in wait.
O, the earl was fair to see!

I made a feast; I bade him come;
I won his love, I brought him home.
The wind is roaring in turret and
tree,
And after supper, on a bed,
Upon my lap he laid his head.
O, the earl was fair to see!

I kiss'd his eyelids into rest,
His ruddy cheek upon my breast.
The wind is raging in turret and
tree,
I hated him with the hate of hell,
But I loved his beauty passing well.
O, the earl was fair to see!

I rose up in the silent night;
I made my dagger sharp and bright.
The wind is raving in turret and
tree,
As half-asleep his breath he drew,
Three times I stabb'd him thro' and
thro'.
O, the earl was fair to see!

I curl'd and comb'd his comely head,
He look'd so grand when he was
dead.
The wind is blowing in turret and
tree,
I wrapt his body in the sheet,
And laid him at his mother's feet.
O, the earl was fair to see!

TO —

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

I SEND you here a sort of allegory —
For you will understand it — of a soul,
A sinful soul possess'd of many gifts,
A spacious garden full of flowering
weeds,
A glorious devil, large in heart and
brain,
That did love beauty only — beauty
seen
In all varieties of mould and mind —
And knowledge for its beauty; or if
good.

Good only for its beauty, seeing not
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge
are three sisters
That dote upon each other, friends to
man,
Living together under the same roof,
And never can be sunder'd without
tears.
And he that shuts Love out, in turn
shall be
Shut out from Love, and on her thresh-
old lie
Howling in outer darkness. Not for this
Was common clay ta'en from the com-
mon earth
Moulded by God, and temper'd with
the tears
Of angels to the perfect shape of man.

THE PALACE OF ART

I BUILT my soul a lordly pleasure-
house,
Wherein at ease for aye to dwell.
I said, 'O Soul, make merry and ca-
rouse,
Dear soul, for all is well.'

A huge crag-platform, smooth as bur-
nish'd brass,
I chose. The ranged ramparts bright
From level meadow-bases of deep grass
Suddenly scaled the light.

Thereon I built it firm. Of ledge or
shelf
The rock rose clear, or winding
stair.
My soul would live alone unto herself¹⁰
In her high palace there.

And 'while the world runs round and
round,' I said,
'Reign thou apart, a quiet king,
Still as, while Saturn whirls, his stead-
fast shade
Sleeps on his luminous ring.'

To which my soul made answer read-
ily:
'Trust me, in bliss I shall abide
In this great mansion, that is built for
me,
So royal-rich and wide.'

Four courts I made, East, West and
 South and North,
 In each a squared lawn, wherefrom
 The golden gorge of dragons spouted
 forth
 A flood of fountain-foam.

And round the cool green courts there
 ran a row
 Of cloisters, branch'd like mighty
 woods,
 Echoing all night to that sonorous
 flow
 Of spouted fountain-floods ;

And round the roofs a gilded gallery
 That lent broad verge to distant
 lands, ³⁰
 Far as the wild swan wings, to where
 the sky
 Dipt down to sea and sands.

From those four jets four currents in
 one swell
 Across the mountain stream'd below
 In misty folds, that floating as they fell
 Lit up a torrent-bow.

And high on every peak a statue
 seem'd
 To hang on tiptoe, tossing up
 A cloud of incense of all odor steam'd
 From out a golden cup. ⁴⁰

So that she thought, 'And who shall
 gaze upon
 My palace with unblinded eyes,
 While this great bow will waver in
 the sun,
 And that sweet incense rise ?'

For that sweet incense rose and never
 fail'd,
 And, while day sank or mounted
 higher,
 The light aerial gallery, golden-rail'd,
 Burnt like a fringe of fire.

Likewise the deep-set windows, stain'd
 and traced,
 Would seem slow-flaming crimson
 fires ⁵⁰
 From shadow'd grotts of arches inter-
 laced,
 And tipt with frost-like spires.

.

Full of long-sounding corridors it was,
 That over-vaulted grateful gloom,
 Thro' which the livelong day my soul
 did pass,
 Well-pleased, from room to room.

Full of great rooms and small the pal-
 ace stood,
 All various, each a perfect whole
 From living Nature, fit for every mood
 And change of my still soul. ⁶⁰

For some were hung with arras green
 and blue,
 Showing a gaudy summer-morn,
 Where with puff'd cheek the belted
 hunter blew
 His wreathed bugle-horn.

One seem'd all dark and red — a tract
 of sand,
 And some one pacing there alone,
 Who paced for ever in a glimmering
 land,
 Lit with a low large moon.

One show'd an iron coast and angry
 waves.
 You seem'd to hear them climb and
 fall ⁷⁰
 And roar rock-thwarted under bellow-
 ing caves,
 Beneath the windy wall.

And one, a full-fed river winding slow
 By herds upon an endless plain,
 The ragged rims of thunder brooding
 low,
 With shadow-streaks of rain.

And one, the reapers at their sultry
 toil.
 In front they bound the sheaves.
 Behind
 Were realms of upland, prodigal in oil,
 And hoary to the wind. ⁸⁰

And one a foreground black with
 stones and slags ;
 Beyond, a line of heights ; and higher
 All barr'd with long white cloud the
 scornful crags ;
 And highest, snow and fire.

And one, an English home — gray twi-
 light pour'd



' In a clear-wall'd city on the sea,
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
Wound with white roses, slept Saint Cecily '

On dewy pastures, dewy trees,
Softer than sleep — all things in order
stored,
A haunt of ancient Peace.

Nor these alone, but every landscape
fair,

As fit for every mood of mind, 90
Or gay, or grave, or sweet, or stern,
was there,
Not less than truth design'd.

.

Or the maid-mother by a crucifix,
In tracts of pasture sunny-warm,
Beneath branch-work of costly sard-
onyx
Sat smiling, babe in arm.

Or in' a clear-wall'd city on the
sea,
Near gilded organ-pipes, her hair
Wound with white roses, slept Saint
Cecily ;
An angel look'd at her. 100

Or thronging all one porch of Paradise
A group of Houris bow'd to see
The dying Islamite, with hands and
eyes
That said, We wait for thee.

Or mythic Uther's deeply - wounded
son
In some fair space of sloping greens
Lay, dozing in the vale of Avalon,
And watch'd by weeping queens.

Or hollowing one hand against his
ear,

To list a foot-fall, ere he saw ¹¹⁰
The wood-nymph, stay'd the Ausonian
king to hear
Of wisdom and of law.

Or over hills with peaky tops en-
grail'd,

And many a tract of palm and
rice,
The throne of Indian Cama slowly
sail'd

A summer fann'd with spice.

Or sweet Europa's mantle blew un-
clasp'd,

From off her shoulder backward
borne;

From one hand droop'd a crocus; one
hand grasp'd

The mild bull's golden horn ¹²⁰

Or else flush'd Ganymede, his rosy
thigh

Half-buried in the eagle's down,
Sole as a flying star shot thro' the
sky

Above the pillar'd town.

Nor these alone; but every legend
fair

Which the supreme Caucasian mind
Carved out of Nature for itself was
there,
Not less than life design'd.

.

Then in the towers I placed great bells
that swung,

Moved of themselves, with silver
sound; ¹³⁰

And with choice paintings of wise men
I hung

The royal dais round.

For there was Milton like a seraph
strong,

Beside him Shakespeare bland and
mild;



'Mythic Uther's deeply-wounded son'

And there the world-worn Dante
grasp'd his song,
And somewhat grimly smiled.

And there the Ionian father of the rest;
A million wrinkles carved his skin;
A hundred winters snow'd upon his
breast,
From cheek and throat and chin.

Above, the fair hall-ceiling stately-set
Many an arch high up did lift,
And angels rising and descending met
With interchange of gift.

Below was all mosaic choicely plann'd
With cycles of the human tale
Of this wide world, the times of every
land
So wrought they will not fail.

The people here, a beast of burden
slow,
Toil'd onward, prick'd with goads
and stings;
Here play'd, a tiger, rolling to and fro
The heads and crowns of kings;

Here rose, an athlete, strong to break
or bind
All force in bonds that might endure,
And here once more like some sick
man declined,
And trusted any cure.

But over these she trod; and those
great bells
Began to chime. She took her
throne;
She sat betwixt the shining oriels,
To sing her songs alone.

And thro' the topmost oriels' colored
flame
Two godlike faces gazed below;
Plato the wise, and large-brow'd
Verulam,
The first of those who know.

And all those names that in their
motion were
Full-welling fountain-heads of
change,
Betwixt the slender shafts were bla-
zon'd fair
In diverse raiment strange;

Thro' which the lights, rose, amber,
emerald, blue,
Flush'd in her temples and her
eyes,
And from her lips, as morn from Mem-
non, drew
Rivers of melodies.

No nightingale delighteth to pro-
long
Her low preamble all alone,
More than my soul to hear her echo's
song
Throb thro' the ribbed stone;

Singing and murmuring in her feast-
ful mirth,
Joying to feel herself alive,
Lord over Nature, lord of the visible
earth,
Lord of the senses five;

Communing with herself: 'All these
are mine,
And let the world have peace or
wars,
'T is one to me.' She — when young
night divine
Crown'd dying day with stars,

Making sweet close of his delicious
toils —
Lit light in wreaths and anadems,
And pure quintessences of precious
oils
In hollow'd moons of gems,

To mimic heaven; and clapt her
hands and cried,
'I marvel if my still delight
In this great house so royal-rich and
wide
Be flatter'd to the height.

'O all things fair to sate my various
eyes!
O shapes and hues that please me
well!
O silent faces of the Great and Wise,
My Gods, with whom I dwell!

'O Godlike isolation which art mine,
I can but count thee perfect gain,
What time I watch the darkening
droves of swine
That range on yonder plain.

'In filthy sloughs they roll a prurient
skin,
They graze and wallow, breed and
sleep;
And oft some brainless devil enters
in,
And drives them to the deep.'

Then of the moral instinct would she
prate
And of the rising from the dead,
As hers by right of full-accomplish'd
Fate;
And at the last she said :

'I take possession of man's mind and
deed.
I care not what the sects may
brawl. 210
I sit as God holding no form of creed,
But contemplating all.'

Full oft the riddle of the painful
earth
Flash'd thro' her as she sat alone,
Yet not the less held she her solemn
mirth,
And intellectual throne.

And so she throve and prosper'd ; so
three years
She prosper'd ; on the fourth she
fell,
Like Herod, when the shout was in
his ears,
Struck thro' with pangs of hell. 220

Lest she should fail and perish utterly,
God, before whom ever lie bare
The abysmal deeps of personality,
Plagued her with sore despair.

When she would think, where'er she
turn'd her sight
The airy hand confusion wrought,
Wrote, 'Mene, mene,' and divided quite
The kingdom of her thought.

Deep dread and loathing of her soli-
tude
Fell on her, from which mood was
born 230
Scorn of herself ; again, from out that
mood
Laughter at her self-scorn.

'What! is not this my place of
strength,' she said,
'My spacious mansion built for me,
Whereof the strong foundation-stones
were laid
Since my first memory ?'

But in dark corners of her palace stood
Uncertain shapes ; and unawares
On white-eyed phantasms weeping
tears of blood,
And horrible nightmares, 240

And hollow shades enclosing hearts of
flame,
And, with dim fretted foreheads all,
On corpses three-months-old at noon
she came,
That stood against the wall.

A spot of dull stagnation, without
light
Or power of movement, seem'd my
soul,
Mid onward-sloping motions infinite
Making for one sure goal ;

A still salt pool, lock'd in with bars
of sand,
Left on the shore, that hears all
night 250
The plunging seas draw backward
from the land
Their moon-led waters white ;

A star that with the choral starry
dance
Join'd not, but stood, and standing
saw
The hollow orb of moving Circum-
stance
Roll'd round by one fix'd law.

Back on herself her serpent pride had
curl'd.
'No voice,' she shriek'd in that lone
hall,
'No voice breaks thro' the stillness of
this world ;
One deep, deep silence all !' 260

She, mouldering with the dull earth's
mouldering sod,
Inwrapt tenfold in slothful shame,
Lay there exiled from eternal God,
Lost to her place and name ;

And death and life she hated equally,
And nothing saw, for her despair,
But dreadful time, dreadful eternity,
No comfort anywhere ;

Remaining utterly confused with
fears,
And ever worse with growing
time, ²⁷⁰
And ever unrelieved by dismal tears,
And all alone in crime.

Shut up as in a crumbling tomb, girt
round
With blackness as a solid wall,
Far off she seem'd to hear the dully
sound
Of human footsteps fall :

As in strange lands a traveller walk-
ing slow,
In doubt and great perplexity,
A little before moonrise hears the low
Moan of an unknown sea ; ²⁸⁰

And knows not if it be thunder, or a
sound
Of rocks thrown down, or one deep
cry
Of great wild beasts ; then thinketh,
'I have found
A new land, but I die.'

She howl'd aloud, 'I am on fire within.
There comes no murmur of reply.
What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die?'

So when four years were wholly
finished,
She threw her royal robes away. ²⁹⁰
'Make me a cottage in the vale,' she
said,
'Where I may mourn and pray.

'Yet pull not down my palace towers,
that are
So lightly, beautifully built ;
Perchance I may return with others
there
When I have purged my guilt.'

LADY CLARA VERE DE VERE

LADY Clara Vere de Vere,
Of me you shall not win renown :

You thought to break a country heart
For pastime, ere you went to town
At me you smiled, but unbeguiled
I saw the snare, and I retired ;
The daughter of a hundred earls,
You are not one to be desired.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
I know you proud to bear your name,
Your pride is yet no mate for mine,
Too proud to care from whence
came.

Nor would I break for your sweet sake
A heart that dotes on truer charms
A simple maiden in her flower
Is worth a hundred coats-of-arms.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
Some meeker pupil you must find,
For, were you queen of all that is,
I could not stoop to such a mind.
You sought to prove how I could love,
And my disdain is my reply.
The lion on your old stone gates
Is not more cold to you than I.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
You put strange memories in my
head.
Not thrice your branching limes have
blown
Since I beheld young Laurence dead.
O, your sweet eyes, your low replies !
A great enchantress you may be ;
But there was that across his throat
Which you had hardly cared to see.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
When thus he met his mother's view,
She had the passions of her kind,
She spake some certain truths of you.
Indeed I heard one bitter word
That scarce is fit for you to hear ;
Her manners had not that repose
Which stamps the caste of Vere de
Vere.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere,
There stands a spectre in your hall ;
The guilt of blood is at your door ;
You changed a wholesome heart to
gall.
You held your course without remorse,
To make him trust his modest worth,
And, last, you fix'd a vacant stare,
And slew him with your noble birth.

Trust me, Clara Vere de Vere,
 From yon blue heavens above us
 bent
 The gardener Adam and his wife
 Smile at the claims of long de-
 scent.
 Howe'er it be, it seems to me,
 'Tis only noble to be good.
 Kind hearts are more than coronets,
 And simple faith than Norman
 blood.

I know you, Clara Vere de Vere,
 You pine among your halls and
 towers;
 The languid light of your proud
 eyes
 Is wearied of the rolling hours.
 In glowing health, with boundless
 wealth,
 But sickening of a vague disease,
 You know so ill to deal with time,
 You needs must play such pranks
 as these.

Clara, Clara Vere de Vere,
 If time be heavy on your hands,
 Are there no beggars at your gate,
 Nor any poor about your lands?
 O, teach the orphan-boy to read,
 Or teach the orphan-girl to sew;
 Pray Heaven for a human heart,
 And let the foolish yeoman go.

THE MAY QUEEN

You must wake and call me early,
 call me early, mother dear;
 To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time of
 all the glad New-year;
 Of all the glad New-year, mother, the
 maddest merriest day,
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mo-
 ther, I'm to be Queen o' the
 May.

There's many a black, black eye, they
 say, but none so bright as mine;
 There's Margaret and Mary, there's
 Kate and Caroline;
 But none so fair as little Alice in all
 the land they say,
 So I'm to be Queen o' the May, mo-
 ther, I'm to be Queen o' the
 May.

I sleep so sound all night, mother,
 that I shall never wake,
 If you do not call me loud when the
 day begins to break;
 But I must gather knots of flowers,
 and buds and garlands gay,
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
 I'm to be Queen o' the May.

As I came up the valley whom think
 ye should I see
 But Robin leaning on the bridge be
 neath the hazel-tree?
 He thought of that sharp look, mother,
 I gave him yesterday,
 But I'm to be Queen o' the May, mo-
 ther, I'm to be Queen o' the
 May.

He thought I was a ghost, mother,
 for I was all in white,
 And I ran by him without speaking,
 like a flash of light.
 They call me cruel-hearted, but I care
 not what they say,
 For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mo-
 ther, I'm to be Queen o' the
 May.

They say he's dying all for love, but
 that can never be;
 They say his heart is breaking, mother
 — what is that to me?
 There's many a bolder lad 'ill woo me
 any summer day,
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May,
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the
 May.

Little Effie shall go with me to-morrow
 to the green,
 And you'll be there, too, mother, to
 see me made the Queen:
 For the shepherd lads on every side
 'ill come from far away,
 And I'm to be Queen o' the May,
 mother, I'm to be Queen o' the
 May.

The honeysuckle round the porch has
 woven its wavy bowers,
 And by the meadow-trenches blow the
 faint sweet cuckoo-flowers;
 And the wild marsh-marigold shines
 like fire in swamps and hollows
 gray,



'It is the last New-year that I shall ever see'

And I'm to be Queen o' the May,
mother, I'm to be Queen o' the
May.

The night-winds come and go, mother,
upon the meadow-grass,
And the happy stars above them seem
to brighten as they pass;
There will not be a drop of rain the
whole of the livelong day,
And I'm to be Queen o' the May,
mother, I'm to be Queen o' the
May.

All the valley, mother, 'ill be fresh
and green and still,
And the cowslip and the crowfoot are
over all the hill,
And the rivulet in the flowery dale 'ill
merrily glance and play,

For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May. 40

So you must wake and call me early,
call me early, mother dear,
To-morrow 'ill be the happiest time
of all the glad New-year;
To-morrow 'ill be of all the year the
maddest merriest day,
For I'm to be Queen o' the May, mother,
I'm to be Queen o' the May.

NEW-YEAR'S EVE

If you're waking call me early, call
me early, mother dear,
For I would see the sun rise upon the
glad New-year.
It is the last New-year that I shall
ever see,

Then you may lay me low i' the
mould and think no more of
me.

To-night I saw the sun set; he set and
left behind

The good old year, the dear old
time, and all my peace of
mind;

And the New-year's coming up, mo-
ther, but I shall never see

The blossom on the blackthorn, the
leaf upon the tree.

Last May we made a crown of flowers;
we had a merry day;

Beneath the hawthorn on the green
they made me Queen of May;

And we danced about the may-pole
and in the hazel copse,

Till Charles's Wain came out above
the tall white chimney-tops.

There's not a flower on all the hills;
the frost is on the pane.

I only wish to live till the snowdrops
come again;

I wish the snow would melt and the
sun come out on high;

I long to see a flower so before the day
I die.

The building rook 'll caw from the
windy tall elm-tree,

And the tufted plover pipe along the
fallow lea,

And the swallow 'll come back again
with summer o'er the wave,

But I shall lie alone, mother, within
the mouldering grave.

Upon the 'chancel-casement, and upon
that grave of mine,

In the early morning the sum-
mer sun 'll shine,

Before the red cock crows from the
farm upon the hill,

When you are warm-asleep, mother,
and all the world is still.

When the flowers come again, mother,
beneath the waning light

You 'll never see me more in the long
gray fields at night;

When from the dry dark wold the sum-
mer airs blow cool

On the oat-grass and the sword-grass,
and the bulrush in the pool.

You 'll bury me, my mother, just be-
neath the hawthorn shade,

And you 'll come sometimes and see
me where I am lowly laid.

I shall not forget you, mother, I shall
hear you when you pass,

With your feet above my head in the
long and pleasant grass.

I have been wild and wayward, but
you 'll forgive me now;

You 'll kiss me, my own mother, and
forgive me ere I go;

Nay, nay, you must not weep, nor let
your grief be wild;

You should not fret for me, mother,
you have another child.

If I can I 'll come again, mother, from
cut my resting-place;

Tho' you 'll not see me, mother, I shall
look upon your face;

Tho' I cannot speak a word, I shall
harken what you say,

And be often, often with you when
you think I'm far away.

Good-night, good-night, when I have
said good-night for evermore,

And you see me carried out from the
threshold of the door,

Don't let Effie come to see me till my
grave be growing green.

She 'll be a better child to you than
ever I have been.

She 'll find my garden-tools upon the
granary floor.

Let her take 'em, they are hers; I shall
never garden more;

But tell her, when I'm gone, to train
the rosebush that I set

About the parlor-window and the box
of mignonette.

Good-night, sweet mother; call me be-
fore the day is born.

All night I lie awake, but I fall asleep
at morn;

But I would see the sun rise upon the
glad New-year,

So, if you're waking, call me, call me
early, mother dear.

CONCLUSION

I THOUGHT to pass away before, and
yet alive I am;
And in the fields all round I hear the
bleating of the lamb.
How sadly, I remember, rose the morn-
ing of the year!
To die before the snowdrop came, and
now the violet's here.

O, sweet is the new violet, that comes
beneath the skies,
And sweeter is the young lamb's voice
to me that cannot rise,
And sweet is all the land about, and
all the flowers that blow,
And sweeter far is death than life to
me that long to go.

It seem'd so hard at first, mother, to
leave the blessed sun,
And now it seems as hard to stay, and
yet His will be done! 10
But still I think it can't be long before
I find release;
And that good man, the clergyman,
has told me words of peace.

O, blessings on his kindly voice and
on his silver hair!
And blessings on his whole life long,
until he meet me there!
O, blessings on his kindly heart and on
his silver head!
A thousand times I blest him, as he
knelt beside my bed.

He taught me all the mercy, for he
show'd me all the sin.
Now, tho' my lamp was lighted late,
there's One will let me in;
Nor would I now be well, mother,
again, if that could be,
For my desire is but to pass to Him
that died for me. 20

I did not hear the dog howl, mother,
or the death-watch beat,
There came a sweeter token when the
night and morning meet;
But sit beside my bed, mother, and put
your hand in mine,
And Effie on the other side, and I will
tell the sign.

All in the wild March-morning I heard
the angels call;
It was when the moon was setting, and
the dark was over all;
The trees began to whisper, and the
wind began to roll,
And in the wild March-morning I heard
them call my soul.

For lying broad awake I thought of
you and Effie dear;
I saw you sitting in the house, and I
no longer here; 30
With all my strength I pray'd for both,
and so I felt resign'd,
And up the valley came a swell of music
on the wind.

I thought that it was fancy, and I
listen'd in my bed,
And then did something speak to me —
I know not what was said;
For great delight and shuddering took
hold of all my mind,
And up the valley came again the
music on the wind.

But you were sleeping; and I said, 'It's
not for them, it's mine.'
And if it come three times, I thought,
I take it for a sign.
And once again it came, and close be-
side the window-bars,
Then seem'd to go right up to heaven
and die among the stars. 40

So now I think my time is near. I
trust it is. I know
The blessed music went that way my
soul will have to go.
And for myself, indeed, I care not if I
go to-day;
But, Effie, you must comfort *her* when
I am past away.

And say to Robin a kind word, and
tell him not to fret;
There's many a worthier than I, would
make him happy yet.
If I had lived — I cannot tell — I might
have been his wife;
But all these things have ceased to be,
with my desire of life.

O, look! the sun begins to rise, the
heavens are in a glow;

He shines upon a hundred fields, and
 all of them I know.
 And there I move no longer now, and⁵⁰
 there his light may shine—
 Wild flowers in the valley for other
 hands than mine.

O, sweet and strange it seems to me,
 that ere this day is done
 The voice, that now is speaking, may
 be beyond the sun—
 For ever and for ever with those just
 souls and true—
 And what is life, that we should moan?
 why make we such ado?

For ever and for ever, all in a blessed
 home—
 And there to wait a little while till
 you and Effie come—

To lie within the light of God, as I lie
 upon your breast—
 And the wicked cease from troubling,
 and the weary are at rest.⁶⁰

THE LOTOS-EATERS

'COURAGE!' he said, and pointed
 toward the land,
 'This mounting wave will roll us
 shoreward soon.'
 In the afternoon they came unto a land
 In which it seemed always afternoon.
 All round the coast the languid air did
 swoon,
 Breathing like one that hath a weary
 dream.
 Full-faced above the valley stood the
 moon;



'I thought that it was fancy, and I listen'd in my bed'

And, like a downward smoke, the
slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and
fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a down-
ward smoke, ¹⁰
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn,
did go;
And some thro' wavering lights and
shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam be-
low.
They saw the gleaming river seaward
flow
From the inner land; far off, three
mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flush'd; and, dew'd with
showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the
woven copse.

The charmed sunset linger'd low
adown
In the red West; thro' mountain clefts
the dale ²⁰
Was seen far inland, and the yellow
down
Border'd with palm, and many a wind-
ing vale
And meadow, set with slender galin-
gale;
A land where all things always seem'd
the same!
And round about the keel with faces
pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eat-
ers came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted
stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof
they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them
And taste, to him the gushing of the
wave ³¹
Far far away did seem to mourn and
rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow
spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the
grave;
And deep-asleep he seem'd, yet all
awake,

And music in his ears his beating heart
did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow
sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the
shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Father-
land,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but
evermore ⁴⁰
Most weary seem'd the sea, weary the
oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren
foam.
Then some one said, 'We will return
no more;'
And all at once they sang, 'Our island
home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no
longer roam.'

CHORIC SONG

I

THERE is sweet music here that softer
falls
Than petals from blown roses on the
grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between
walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming
pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down
from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And thro' the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved
flowers weep, ¹⁰
And from the craggy ledge the poppy
hangs in sleep.

II

Why are we weigh'd upon with heavi-
ness,
And utterly consumed with sharp dis-
tress,
While all things else have rest from
weariness?
All things have rest: why should we
toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual ~~mean~~,



'O, rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more'

Still from one sorrow to another
 thrown ;
 Nor ever fold our wings,
 And cease from wanderings, 20
 Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy
 balm ;
 Nor harken what the inner spirits sing,
 'There is no joy but calm !' —
 Why should we only toil, the roof and
 crown of things ?

III

Lo ! in the middle of the wood,
 The folded leaf is woo'd from out the
 bud

With winds upon the branch, and there
 Grows green and broad, and takes no
 care,
 Sun-steep'd at noon, and in the moon
 Nightly dew-fed ; and turning yellow
 Falls, and floats adown the air. 31
 Lo ! sweeten'd with the summer light,
 The full-juiced apple, waxing over-
 mellow,
 Drops in a silent autumn night.
 All its allotted length of days
 The flower ripens in its place,
 Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath
 no toil,
 Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

IV

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
 Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea. 40
 Death is the end of life; ah, why
 Should life all labor be?
 Let us alone. Time driveth onward
 fast,
 And in a little while our lips are
 dumb.
 Let us alone. What is it that will
 last?
 All things are taken from us, and be-
 come
 Portions and parcels of the dreadful
 past.
 Let us alone. What pleasure can we
 have
 To war with evil? Is there any
 peace
 In ever climbing up the climbing
 wave? 50
 All things have, rest, and ripen toward
 the grave
 In silence—ripen, fall, and cease:
 Give us long rest or death, dark death,
 or dreamful ease.

V

How sweet it were, hearing the down-
 ward stream,
 With half-shut eyes ever to seem
 Falling asleep in a half-dream!
 To dream and dream, like yonder
 amber light,
 Which will not leave the myrrh-bush
 on the height;
 To hear each other's whisper'd speech;
 Eating the Lotos day by day, 60
 To watch the crisping ripples on the
 beach,
 And tender curving lines of creamy
 spray;
 To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
 To the influence of mild-minded mel-
 ancholy;
 To muse and brood and live again in
 memory,
 With those old faces of our infancy
 Heap'd over with a mound of grass,
 Two handfuls of white dust, shut in
 an urn of brass!

VI

Dear is the memory of our wedded
 lives,

And dear the last embraces of our
 wives
 And their warm tears; but all hath 70
 suffer'd change;
 For surely now our household hearths
 are cold,
 Our sons inherit us, our looks are
 strange,
 And we should come like ghosts to
 trouble joy.
 Or else the island princes over-bold
 Have eat our substance, and the min-
 strel sings
 Before them of the ten years' war in
 Troy,
 And our great deeds, as half-forgotten
 things.
 Is there confusion in the little isle?
 Let what is broken so remain. 80
 The Gods are hard to reconcile;
 'Tis hard to settle order once again.
 There is confusion worse than death,
 Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
 Long labor unto aged breath,
 Sore task to hearts worn out by many
 wars
 And eyes grown dim with gazing on
 the pilot-stars.

VII

But, propt on beds of amaranth and
 moly,
 How sweet—while warm airs lull us,
 blowing lowly—
 With half-dropt eyelid still, 90
 Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
 To watch the long bright river draw-
 ing slowly
 His waters from the purple hill—
 To hear the dewy echoes calling
 From cave to cave thro' the thick-
 twined vine—
 To watch the emerald-color'd water
 falling
 Thro' many a woven acanthus-wreath
 divine!
 Only to hear and see the far-off spar-
 kling brine,
 Only to hear were sweet, stretch'd out
 beneath the pine.

VIII

The Lotos blooms below the barren
 peak, 100
 The Lotos blows by every winding
 creek;

All day the wind breathes low with
 mellow tone;
 Thro' every hollow cave and alley
 lone
 Round and round the spicy downs the
 yellow Lotos-dust is blown.
 We have had enough of action, and of
 motion we,
 Roll'd to starboard, roll'd to larboard,
 when the surge was seething
 free,
 Where the wallowing monster spouted
 his foam-fountains in the sea.
 Let us swear an oath, and keep it with
 an equal mind,
 In the hollow Lotos-land to live and
 lie reclined
 On the hills like Gods together, care-
 less of mankind. 110
 For they lie beside their nectar, and
 the bolts are hurl'd
 Far below them in the valleys, and
 the clouds are lightly curl'd
 Round their golden houses, girdled
 with the gleaming world;
 Where they smile in secret, looking
 over wasted lands,
 Blight and famine, plague and earth-
 quake, roaring deeps and fiery
 sands,
 Clanging fights, and flaming towns,
 and sinking ships, and praying
 hands.
 But they smile, they find a music cen-
 tred in a doleful song
 Steaming up, a lamentation and an
 ancient tale of wrong,
 Like a tale of little meaning tho' the
 words are strong;
 Chanted from an ill-used race of men
 that cleave the soil, 120
 Sow the seed, and reap the harvest
 with enduring toil,
 Storing yearly little dues of wheat,
 and wine and oil;
 Till they perish and they suffer—
 some, 'tis whisper'd—down in
 hell
 Suffer endless anguish, others in Ely-
 sian valleys dwell,
 Resting weary limbs at last on beds of
 asphodel.
 Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet
 than toil, the shore
 Than labor in the deep mid-ocean,
 wind and wave and oar;

O rest ye, brother mariners, we will
 not wander more.

A DREAM OF FAIR WOMEN

I READ, before my eyelids dropt their
 shade,
 'The Legend of Good Women,' long
 ago

Sung by the morning star of song,
 who made
 His music heard below;

Dan Chaucer, the first warbler, whose
 sweet breath

Preluded those melodious bursts that
 fill

The spacious times of great Eliza
 beth
 With sounds that echo still.

And, for a while, the knowledge of
 his art

Held me above the subject, as strong
 gales 13

Hold swollen clouds from raining, tho'
 my heart,
 Brimful of those wild tales,

Charged both mine eyes with tears.
 In every land

I saw, wherever light illumineth,
 Beauty and anguish walking hand in
 hand

The downward slope to death.

Those far-renowned brides of ancient
 song

Peopled the hollow dark, like burn-
 ing stars,

And I heard sounds of insult, shame
 and wrong,

And trumpets blown for wars; 14

And clattering flints batter'd with
 clanging hoofs;

And I saw crowds in column'd sanc-
 tuaries,

And forms that pass'd at windows and
 on roofs

Of marble palaces;

Corpses across the threshold, heroes
 tall

Dislodging pinnacle and parapet
Upon the tortoise creeping to the
wall,
Lances in ambush set ;

And high shrine-doors burst thro' with
heated blasts
That run before the fluttering
tongues of fire ;
White surf wind-scatter'd over sails³⁰
and masts,
And ever climbing higher ;

Squadrons and squares of men in bra-
zen plates,
Scaffolds, still sheets of water,
divers woes,
Ranges of glimmering vaults with iron
grates,
And hush'd seraglios.

So shape chased shape as swift as,
when to land
Bluster the winds and tides the self-
same way,
Crisp foam-flakes scud along the level
sand,
Torn from the fringe of spray. 40

I started once, or seem'd to start in
pain,
Resolved on noble things, and strove
to speak.
As when a great thought strikes along
the brain
And flushes all the cheek.

And once my arm was lifted to hew
down
A cavalier from off his saddle-bow,
That bore a lady from a leaguer'd
town ;
And then, I know not how,

All those sharp fancies, by down-laps-
ing thought
Stream'd onward, lost their edges,
and did creep⁵⁰
Roll'd on each other, rounded,
smooth'd, and brought
Into the gulfs of sleep.

At last methought that I had wander'd
far
In an old wood ; fresh-wash'd in
coolest dew

The maiden splendors of the morning
star
Shook in the steadfast blue.

Enormous elm-tree boles did stoop and
lean
Upon the dusky brushwood under-
neath
Their broad curved branches, fledged
with clearest green,
New from its silken sheath. 60

The dim red Morn had died, her jour-
ney done,
And with dead lips smiled at the
twilight plain,
Half-fallen across the threshold of the
sun,
Never to rise again.

There was no motion in the dumb dead
air,
Not any song of bird or sound of
rill ;
Gross darkness of the inner sepul-
chre
Is not so deadly still

As that wide forest. Growths of jas-
mine turn'd
Their humid arms festooning tree to
tree,
And at the root thro' lush green grasses⁷⁰
burn'd
The red anemone.

I knew the flowers, I knew the leaves,
I knew
The tearful glimmer of the languid
dawn
On those long, rank, dark wood-walks
drench'd in dew,
Leading from lawn to lawn.

The smell of violets, hidden in the
green,
Pour'd back into my empty soul and
frame
The times when I remember to have
been
Joyful and free from blame. 80

And from within me a clear under-
tone
Thrill'd thro' mine ears in that un-
blissful clime,

'Pass freely thro'; the wood is all
thine own
Until the end of time.'

At length I saw a lady within call,
Still^{er} than chisell'd marble, stand-
ing there;
A daughter of the gods, divinely tall,
And most divinely fair.

Her loveliness with shame and with
surprise

Froze my swift speech; she turn-
ing on my face ⁹⁰
The star-like sorrows of immortal eyes,
Spoke slowly in her place :

'I had great beauty; ask thou not my
name :

No one can be more wise than destiny.
Many drew swords and died. Where
e'er I came
I brought calamity.'

'No marvel, sovereign lady: in fairfield
Myself for such a face had boldly
died,'
I answer'd free; and turning I ap-
peal'd
To one that stood beside. ¹⁰⁰

But she, with sick and scornful looks
averse,

To her full height her stately stature
draws;

'My youth,' she said, 'was blasted
with a curse :

This woman was the cause.



'Dislodging pinnacle and parapet'

'I was cut off from hope in that sad
place
Which men call'd Aulis in those iron
years:

My father held his hand upon his
face;
I, blinded with my tears,

'Still strove to speak: my voice was
thick with sighs
As in a dream. Dimly I could de-
sery 110

The stern black-bearded kings with
wolfish eyes,
Waiting to see me die.

'The high masts flicker'd as they lay
afloat;
The crowds, the temples, waver'd,
and the shore;
The bright death quiver'd at the vic-
tim's throat —
Touch'd — and I knew no more.'

Whereto the other with a downward
brow:

'I would the white cold heavy-
plunging foam,
Whirl'd by the wind, had roll'd me
deep below,
Then when I left my home.' 120

Her slow full words sank thro' the
silence drear,
As thunder-drops fall on a sleeping
sea:

Sudden I heard a voice that cried,
'Come here,
That I may look on thee.'

I turning saw, throned on a flowery
rise,
One sitting on a crimson scarf un-
roll'd;

A queen, with swarthy cheeks and
bold black eyes,
Brow-bound with burning gold.

She, flashing forth a haughty smile,
began:

'I govern'd men by change, and so
I sway'd' 130

All moods. 'Tis long since I have
seen a man.

Once, like the moon, I made

'The ever-shifting currents of the
blood
According to my humor ebb and
flow.

I have no men to govern in this wood:
That makes my only woe.

'Nay — yet it chafes me that I could
not bend
One will; nor tame and tutor with
mine eye

That dull cold-blooded Cæsar. Pry-
thee, friend,
Where is Mark Antony? 140

'The man, my lover, with whom I
rode sublime
On Fortune's neck; we sat as God
by God:
The Nilus would have risen before
his time
And flooded at our nod.

'We drank the Libyan Sun to sleep,
and lit
Lamps which out-burn'd Canopus.
O, my life
In Egypt! O, the dalliance and the wit,
The flattery and the strife,

'And the wild kiss, when fresh from
war's alarms,
My Hercules, my Roman Antony, 150
My mailed Bacchus leapt into my
arms,
Contented there to die!

'And there he died: and when I heard
my name
Sigh'd forth with life I would not
brook my fear
Of the other; with a worm I balk'd
his fame.
What else was left? look here!' —

With that she tore her robe apart, and
half
The polish'd argent of her breast to
sight
Laid bare. Thereto she pointed with
a laugh,
Showing the aspick's bite. — 160

'I died a Queen. The Roman soldier
found



'Kneeling, with one arm about her king,
Drew forth the poison with her balmy breath'

Me lying dead, my crown about my
brows,
A name for ever !—lying robed and
crown'd,
Worthy a Roman spouse.'

Her warbling voice, a lyre of widest
range
Struck by all passion, did fall down
and glance
From tone to tone, and glided thro' all
change
Of liveliest utterance.

When she made pause I knew not for
delight;
Because with sudden motion from
the ground ¹⁷⁰
She raised her piercing orbs, and fill'd
with light
The interval of sound.

Still with their fires Love tipt his
keenest darts;

As once they drew into two burn-
ing rings
All beams of Love, melting the mighty
hearts
Of captains and of kings.

Slowly my sense undazzled. Then I
heard
A noise of some one coming thro'
the lawn,
And singing clearer than the crested
bird
That claps his wings at dawn : &c

'The torrent brooks of hallow'd Israel
From craggy hollows pouring, late
and soon,
Sound all night long, in falling thro'
the dell,
Far-heard beneath the moon.

'The balmy moon of blessed Israel
Floods all the deep-blue gloom with
beams divine;

All night the splinter'd crags that
wall the dell
With spires of silver shine.'

As one that museth where broad sun-
shine laves
The lawn by some cathedral, thro'
the door 190
Hearing the holy organ rolling
waves
Of sound on roof and floor

Within, and anthem sung, is charm'd
and tied
To where he stands, — so stood I,
when that flow
Of music left the lips of her that
died
To save her father's vow ;

The daughter of the warrior Gilead-
ite,
A maiden pure ; as when she went
along
From Mizpeh's tower'd gate with wel-
come light,
With timbrel and with song. 200

My words leapt forth : ' Heaven heads
the count of crimes
With that wild oath.' She render'd
answer high :
' Not so, nor once alone ; a thousand
times
I would be born and die.

' Single I grew, like some green plant,
whose root
Creeps to the garden water-pipes
beneath,
Feeding the flower ; but ere my flower
to fruit
Changed, I was ripe for death.

' My God, my land, my father — these
did move
Me from my bliss of life that Nature
gave, 210
Lower'd softly with a threefold cord
of love
Down to a silent grave.

' And I went mourning, " No fair He-
brew boy
Shall smile away my maiden blame
among

The Hebrew mothers " — emptied of
all joy,
Leaving the dance and song,

' Leaving the olive-gardens far below,
Leaving the promise of my bridal
bower,
The valleys of grape-loaded vines that
glow
Beneath the battled tower. 220

' The light white cloud swam over us.
Anon
We heard the lion roaring from his
den ;
We saw the large white stars rise one
by one,
Or, from the darken'd glen,

' Saw God divide the night with flying
flame,
And thunder on the everlasting hills.
I heard Him, for He spake, and grief
became
A solemn scorn of ills.

' When the next moon was roll'd into
the sky,
Strength came to me that equal'd
my desire. 230
How beautiful a thing it was to
die
For God and for my sire !

' It comforts me in this one thought
to dwell,
That I subdued me to my father's
will ;
Because the kiss he gave me, ere I
fell,
Sweetens the spirit still.

' Moreover it is written that my race
Hew'd Ammon, hip and thigh, from
Aroer
On Arnon unto Minneth.' Here her
face
Glow'd, as I look'd at her. 240

She lock'd her lips ; she left me where
I stood :
' Glory to God,' she sang, and past
afar,
Thridding the sombre boskage of the
wood,
Toward the morning-star.

Losing her carol I stood pensively;
 As one that from a casement leans
 his head,
 When midnight bells cease ringing
 suddenly,
 And the old year is dead.

'Alas! alas!' a low voice, full of care,
 Murmur'd beside me: 'Turn and
 look on me; ²⁵⁰
 I am that Rosamond, whom men call
 fair,
 If what I was I be.

'Would I had been some maiden coarse
 and poor!
 O me, that I should ever see the
 light!
 Those dragon eyes of anger'd Eleanor
 Do hunt me, day and night.'

She ceased in tears, fallen from hope
 and trust;
 To whom the Egyptian: 'O, you
 tamely died!
 You should have clung to Fulvia's
 waist, and thrust
 The dagger thro' her side.' ²⁶⁰

With that sharp sound the white
 dawn's creeping beams,
 Stolen to my brain, dissolved the
 mystery
 Of folded sleep. The captain of my
 dreams
 Ruled in the eastern sky.

Morn broaden'd on the borders of the
 dark
 Ere I saw her who clasp'd in her
 last trance
 Her murder'd father's head, or Joan
 of Arc,
 A light of ancient France;

Or her who knew that Love can van-
 quish Death,
 Who kneeling, with one arm about
 her king, ²⁷⁰
 Drew forth the poison with her balmy
 breath,
 Sweet as new buds in spring.

No memory labors longer from the deep
 Gold-mines of thought to lift the
 hidden ore

That glimpses, moving up, than I
 from sleep
 To gather and tell o'er

Each little sound and sight. With
 what dull pain
 Compass'd, how eagerly I sought to
 strike
 Into that wondrous track of dreams
 again!
 But no two dreams are like. ²⁸⁰

As when a soul laments, which hath
 been blest,
 Desiring what is mingled with past
 years,
 In yearnings that can never be exprest
 By signs or groans or tears;

Because all words, tho' cull'd with
 choicest art,
 Failing to give the bitter of the
 sweet,
 Wither beneath the palate, and the
 heart
 Faints, faded by its heat.

THE BLACKBIRD

O BLACKBIRD! sing me something
 well:
 While all the neighbors shoot thee
 round,
 I keep smooth plats of fruitful
 ground,
 Where thou mayst warble, cat, and
 dwell.

The espaliers and the standards all
 Are thine; the range of lawn and
 park;
 The unnetted black-hearts ripen
 dark,
 All thine, against the garden wall.

Yet, tho' I spared thee all the spring,
 Thy sole delight is, sitting still,
 With that gold dagger of thy bill
 To fret the summer jenneting.

A golden bill! the silver tongue,
 Cold February loved, is dry;
 Plenty corrupts the melody
 That made thee famous once when
 young;



'Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow'

And in the sultry garden-squares,
Now thy flute-notes are changed to
coarse,
I hear thee not at all, or hoarse
As when a hawker hawks his wares.

Take warning! he that will not sing
While yon sun prospers in the blue,
Shall sing for want, ere leaves are
now,
Caught in the frozen palms of Spring.

THE DEATH OF THE OLD YEAR

FULL knee-deep lies the winter snow,
And the winter winds are wearily
sighing;

Toll ye the church-bell sad and slow,
And tread softly and speak low,
For the old year lies a-dying.
Old year, you must not die;
You came to us so readily,
You lived with us so steadily,
Old year, you shall not die.

He lieth still, he doth not move;
He will not see the dawn of day.
He hath no other life above.
He gave me a friend, and a true true-
love,
And the New-year will take 'em away.
Old year, you must not go;
So long as you have been with
us,
Such joy as you have seen with us,
Old year, you shall not go.

He froth'd his bumpers to the brim ;
 A jollier year we shall not see.
 But tho' his eyes are waxing dim,
 And tho' his foes speak ill of him,
 He was a friend to me.

Old year, you shall not die ;
 We did so laugh and cry with you,
 I've half a mind to die with you,
 Old year, if you must die.

He was full of joke and jest,
 But all his merry quips are o'er.
 To see him die, across the waste
 His son and heir doth ride post-haste,
 But he'll be dead before.

Every one for his own.
 The night is starry and cold, my
 friend,
 And the New-year blithe and bold,
 my friend,
 Comes up to take his own.

How hard he breathes ! over the snow
 I heard just now the crowing cock.
 The shadows flicker to and fro ;
 The cricket chirps ; the light burns
 low ;

'T is nearly twelve o'clock.
 Shake hands, before you die.
 Old year, we'll dearly rue for
 you.
 What is it we can do for you ?
 Speak out before you die.

His face is growing sharp and thin.
 Alack ! our friend is gone.
 Close up his eyes ; tie up his chin ;
 Step from the corpse, and let him in
 That standeth there alone,

And waiteth at the door.
 There's a new foot on the floor,
 my friend,
 And a new face at the door, my
 friend,
 A new face at the door.

TO J. S.

[James Spedding]

THE wind that beats the mountain
 blows

More softly round the open wold,
 And gently comes the world to those
 That are cast in gentle mould.

And me this knowledge bolder made,
 Or else I had not dared to flow
 In these words toward you, and invade
 Even with a verse your holy woe.

'T is strange that those we lean on most,
 Those in whose laps our limbs are
 nursed,
 Fall into shadow, soonest lost ;
 Those we love first are taken first

God gives us love. Something to love
 He lends us ; but, when love is
 grown
 To ripeness, that on which it throve
 Falls off, and love is left alone.

This is the curse of time. Alas !
 In grief I am not all unlearn'd ;
 Once thro' mine own doors Death did
 pass ;
 One went who never hath return'd.

He will not smile — not speak to me
 Once more. Two years his chair
 is seen
 Empty before us. That was he
 Without whose life I had not been.

Your loss is rarer ; for this star
 Rose with you thro' a little arc
 Of heaven, nor having wander'd far
 Shot on the sudden into dark.

I knew your brother ; his mute dust
 I honor and his living worth ;
 A man more pure and bold and just
 Was never born into the earth.

I have not look'd upon you nigh
 Since that dear soul hath fallen
 asleep.
 Great Nature is more wise than I ;
 I will not tell you not to weep.

And tho' mine own eyes fill with dew,
 Drawn from the spirit thro' the
 brain,
 I will not even preach to you,
 ' Weep, weeping dulls the inward
 pain.'

Let Grief be her own mistress still.
 She loveth her own anguish deep
 More than much pleasure. Let her will
 Be done — to weep or not to weep.

I will not say, 'God's ordinance
Of death is blown in every wind ;'
For that is not a common chance
That takes away a noble mind.

His memory long will live alone
In all our hearts, as mournful
light
That broods above the fallen sun,
And dwells in heaven half the
night.

Vain solace ! Memory standing near
Cast down her eyes, and in her
throat

Her voice seem'd distant, and a tear
Dropt on the letters as I wrote.

I wrote I know not what. In truth,
How *should* I soothe you any way,
Who miss the brother of your youth ?
Yet something I did wish to say ;

For he too was a friend to me.
Both are my friends, and my true
breast
Bleedeth for both ; yet it may be
That only silence suiteth best.

Words weaker than your grief would
make
Grief more. 'T were better I
should cease
Although myself could almost take
The place of him that sleeps in
peace.

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace ;
Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul,
While the stars burn, the moons in-
crease,
And the great ages onward roll.

Sleep till the end, true soul and sweet.
Nothing comes to thee new or
strange.

Sleep full of rest from head to feet ;
Lie still, dry dust, secure of
change.

ON A MOURNER

I

NATURE, so far as in her lies,
Imitates God, and turns her face

To every land beneath the skies,
Counts nothing that she meets with
base,
But lives and loves in every place ;

II

Fills out the homely quickset-screens,
And makes the purple lilac ripe,
Steps from her airy hill, and greens
The swamp, where humm'd the
dropping snipe,
With moss and braided marish-pipe ;

III

And on thy heart a finger lays,
Saying, 'Beat quicker, for the time
Is pleasant, and the woods and ways
Are pleasant, and the beech and
lime
Put forth and feel a gladder clime.'

IV

And murmurs of a deeper voice,
Going before to some far shrine,
Teach that sick heart the stronger
choice,
Till all thy life one way incline
With one wide Will that closes thine.

V

And when the zoning eve has died
Where yon dark valleys wind for-
lorn,
Come Hope and Memory, spouse and
bride,
From out the borders of the morn,
With that fair child betwixt them
born.

VI

And when no mortal motion jars
The blackness round the tombing
sod,
Thro' silence and the trembling stars
Comes Faith from tracts no feet have
trod,
And Virtue, like a household god

VII

Promising empire ; such as those
Once heard at dead of night to
greet
Troy's wandering prince, so that he
rose
With sacrifice, while all the fleet
Had rest by stony hills of Crete.

'YOU ASK ME, WHY, THO' ILL
AT EASE'

You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,
Within this region I subsist,
Whose spirits falter in the mist,
And languish for the purple seas.

It is the land that freemen till,
That sober-suited Freedom chose,
The land, where girt with friends or
foes
A man may speak the thing he will ;

A land of settled government,
A land of just and old renown,
Where Freedom slowly broadens
down
From precedent to precedent ;

Where faction seldom gathers head,
But, by degrees to fullness wrought,
The strength of some diffusive
thought
Hath time and space to work and
spread.

Should banded unions persecute
Opinion, and induce a time
When single thought is civil crime,
And individual freedom mute,

Tho' power should make from land to
land
The name of Britain trebly great—
Tho' every channel of the State
Should fill and choke with golden
sand—

Yet waft me from the harbor-mouth,
Wild wind ! I seek a warmer
sky,
And I will see before I die
The palms and temples of the South.

'OF OLD SAT FREEDOM ON
THE HEIGHTS'

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
The thunders breaking at her feet ;
Above her shook the starry lights ;
She heard the torrents meet.

There in her place she did rejoice,
Self-gather'd in her prophet-mind,

But fragments of her mighty voice
Came rolling on the wind.

Then stept she down thro' town and
field
To mingle with the human race,
And part by part to men reveal'd
The fullness of her face—

Grave mother of majestic works,
From her isle-altar gazing down,
Who, Godlike, grasps the triple forks,
And, king-like, wears the crown.

Her open eyes desire the truth.
The wisdom of a thousand years
Is in them. May perpetual youth
Keep dry their light from tears ;

That her fair form may stand and shine,
Make bright our days and light our
dreams,
Turning to scorn with lips divine
The falsehood of extremes !

'LOVE THOU THY LAND, WITH
LOVE FAR-BROUGHT'

Love thou thy land, with love far-
brought
From out the storied past, and used
Within the present, but transfused
Thro' future time by power of
thought ;

True love turn'd round on fixed poles,
Love, that endures not sordid ends,
For English natures, freemen,
friends,
Thy brothers and immortal souls.

But pamper not a hasty time,
Nor feed with crude imaginings
The herd, wild hearts and feeble
wings
That every sophister can lime.

Deliver not the tasks of might
To weakness, neither hide the ray
From those, not blind, who wait for
day,
Tho' sitting girt with doubtful light.

Make knowledge circle with the
winds ;

But let her herald, Reverence, fly
 Before her to whatever sky
 Bear seed of men and growth of
 minds. 20

Watch what main-currents draw the
 years;
 Cut Prejudice against the grain.
 But gentle words are always gain;
 Regard the weakness of thy peers.

Nor toil for title, place, or touch
 Of pension, neither count on praise—
 It grows to guerdon after-days.
 Nor deal in watch-words overmuch;

Not clinging to some ancient saw,
 Not master'd by some modern
 term, 30
 Not swift nor slow to change, but
 firm;
 And in its season bring the law,

That from Discussion's lip may fall
 With Life that, working strongly,
 binds—
 Set in all lights by many minds,
 To close the interests of all.

For Nature also, cold and warm,
 And moist and dry, devising long,
 Thro' many agents making strong,
 Matures the individual form. 40

Meet is it changes should control
 Our being, lest we rust in ease.
 We all are changed by still degrees,
 All but the basis of the soul.

So let the change which comes be
 free
 To ingroove itself with that which
 flies,
 And work, a joint of state, that
 plies
 Its office, moved with sympathy.

A saying hard to shape in act;
 For all the past of Time reveals 50
 A bridal dawn of thunder-peals,
 Wherever Thought hath wedded Fact.

Even now we hear with inward strife
 A motion toiling in the gloom—
 The Spirit of the years to come
 Yearning to mix himself with Life.

A slow-develop'd strength awaits
 Completion in a painful school;
 Phantoms of other forms of rule,
 New Majesties of mighty States— 60

The warders of the growing hour,
 But vague in vapor, hard to mark;
 And round them sea and air are
 dark
 With great contrivances of Power.

Of many changes, aptly join'd,
 Is bodied forth the second whole.
 Regard gradation, lest the soul
 Of Discord race the rising wind;

A wind to puff your idol-fires, 69
 And heap their ashes on the head;
 To shune the boast so often made,
 That we are wiser than our sires.

O, yet, if Nature's evil star
 Drive men in manhood, as in youth,
 To follow flying steps of Truth
 Across the brazen bridge of war—

If New and Old, disastrous feud,
 Must ever shock, like armed foes,
 And this be true, till Time shall
 close,
 That Principles are rain'd in blood; 80

Not yet the wise of heart would
 cease
 To hold his hope thro' shame and
 guilt,
 But with his hand against the
 hilt,
 Would pace the troubled land, like
 Peace;

Not less, tho' dogs of Faction bay,
 Would serve his kind in deed and
 word,
 Certain, if knowledge bring the
 sword,
 That knowledge takes the sword
 away—

Would love the gleams of good that
 broke
 From either side, nor veil his eyes; 90
 And if some dreadful need should
 rise
 Would strike, and firmly, and one
 stroke.

To-morrow yet would reap to-day,
 As we bear blossom of the dead ;
 Earn well the thrifty months, nor
 wed
 Raw Haste, half-sister to Delay.

ENGLAND AND AMERICA IN 1782

O THOU that sendest out the man
 To rule by land and sea,
 Strong mother of a Lion-line,
 Be proud of those strong sons of thine
 Who wrench'd their rights from
 thee !

What wonder if in noble heat
 Those men thine arms withstood,
 Retought the lesson thou hadst taught,
 And in thy spirit with thee fought—
 Who sprang from English blood !

But thou rejoice with liberal joy,
 Lift up thy rocky face,

And shatter, when the storms are
 black,
 In many a streaming torrent back,
 The seas that shock thy base !

Whatever harmonies of law
 The growing world assume,
 Thy work is thine — the single note
 From that deep chord which Hamp-
 den smote
 Will vibrate to the doom.

THE GOOSE

I KNEW an old wife lean and poor,
 Her rags scarce held together ;
 There strode a stranger to the door,
 And it was windy weather.

He held a goose upon his arm,
 He utter'd rhyme and reason :
 'Here, take the goose, and keep you
 warm,
 It is a stormy season.'



'Quoth she, "The devil take the goose,
 And God forget the stranger"'

She caught the white goose by the
leg,

A goose — 't was no great matter.
The goose let fall a golden egg
With cackle and with clatter.

She dropt the goose, and caught the
pelf,

And ran to tell her neighbors,
And bless'd herself, and cursed her-
self,

And rested from her labors ;

And feeding high, and living soft,
Grew plump and able-bodied,
Until the grave churchwarden doff'd,
The parson smirk'd and nodded.

So sitting, served by man and maid,
She felt her heart grow prouder ;
But ah ! the more the white goose
laid

It clack'd and cackled louder.

It clutter'd here, it chuckled there,
It stirr'd the old wife's mettle ;

She shifted in her elbow-chair,
And hurl'd the pan and kettle.

'A quinsy choke thy cursed note !'

Then wax'd her anger stronger.

'Go, take the goose, and wring her
throat,

I will not bear it longer.'

Then yelp'd the cur, and yawl'd the
cat,

Ran Gaffer, stumbled Gammer.
The goose flew this way and flew
that,

And fill'd the house with clamor.

As head and heels upon the floor
They flounder'd all together,
There strode a stranger to the door,
And it was windy weather.

He took the goose upon his arm,
He utter'd words of scorning :
'So keep you cold, or keep you
warm,
It is a stormy morning.'

The wild wind rang from park and
plain,

And round the attics rumbled,
Till all the tables danced again,
And half the chimneys tumbled.

The glass blew in, the fire blew out,
The blast was hard and harder.
Her cap blew off, her gown blew
up,

And a whirlwind clear'd the larder ;

And while on all sides breaking loose
Her household fled the danger,
Quoth she, 'The devil take the goose,
And God forget the stranger !'



“An arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite”

ENGLISH IDYLS AND OTHER POEMS

THE EPIC

At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-
eve, —
The game of forfeits done — the girls
all kiss'd
Beneath the sacred bush and past
away —
The parson Holmes, the poet Everard
Hall,

The host, and I sat round the wassail
bowl,
Then half-way ebb'd; and there we
held a talk,
How all the old honor had from Christ-
mas gone,
Or gone or dwindled down to some odd
games
In some odd nooks like this; till I, tired
out

With cutting eights that day upon the
 pond,¹⁰
 Where, three times slipping from the
 outer edge,
 I bump'd the ice into three several
 stars,
 Fell in a doze; and half-awake I heard
 The parson taking wide and wider
 sweeps,
 Now harping on the church-commis-
 sioners,
 Now hawking at geology and schism;
 Until I woke, and found him settled
 down
 Upon the general decay of faith
 Right thro' the world: 'at home was
 little left,
 And none abroad; there was no anchor,
 none,²⁰
 To hold by.' Francis, laughing, clapt
 his hand
 On Everard's shoulder, with 'I hold
 by him.'
 'And I,' quoth Everard, 'by the was-
 sail-bowl.'
 'Why yes,' I said, 'we knew your
 gift that way
 At college; but another which you
 had —
 I mean of verse (for so we held it then),
 What came of that?' 'You know,'
 said Frank, 'he burnt
 His epic, his King Arthur, some twelve
 books' —
 And then to me demanding why: 'O,
 sir,
 He thought that nothing new was said,
 or else³⁰
 Something so said 'twas nothing —
 that a truth
 Looks freshest in the fashion of the
 day;
 God knows; he has a mint of reasons;
 ask.
 It pleased *me* well enough.' 'Nay,
 nay,' said Hall,
 'Why take the style of those heroic
 times?
 For nature brings not back the masto-
 don,
 Nor we those times; and why should
 any man
 Remodel models? these twelve books
 of mine
 Were faint Homeric echoes, nothing-
 worth,

Mere chaff and draff, much better
 burnt.' 'But I,'⁴⁰
 Said Francis, 'pick'd the eleventh from
 this hearth,
 And have it; keep a thing, its use will
 come.
 I hoard it as a sugar-plum for Holmes.'
 He laugh'd, and I, tho' sleepy, like a
 horse
 That hears the corn-bin open, prick'd
 my ears;
 For I remember'd Everard's college
 fame
 When we were Freshmen. Then at
 my request
 He brought it; and the poet, little
 urged,
 But with some prelude of disparage-
 ment,
 Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and
 aes,⁵⁰
 Deep-chested music, and to this re-
 sult.

MORTE D'ARTHUR

So all day long the noise of battle
 roll'd
 Among the mountains by the winter
 sea,
 Until King Arthur's table, man by
 man,
 Had fallen in Lyonness about their lord,
 King Arthur; then, because his wound
 was deep,
 The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
 Sir Bedivere, the last of all his knights,
 And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
 A broken chancel with a broken
 cross,⁶⁰
 That stood on a dark strait of barren
 land.
 On one side lay the ocean, and on one
 Lay a great water, and the moon was
 full.
 Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedi-
 vere:
 'The sequel of to-day unsolders all
 The goodliest fellowship of famous
 knights
 Whereof this world holds record. Such
 a sleep
 They sleep — the men I loved. I think
 that we
 Shall never more, at any future time,

Delight our souls with talk of knightly
 deeds, 70
 Walking about the gardens and the
 halls
 Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
 I perish by this people which I
 made, —
 Tho' Merlin sware that I should come
 again
 To rule once more — but let what will
 be be,
 I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
 That without help I cannot last till
 morn.
 Thou therefore take my brand Excali-
 bur,
 Which was my pride; for thou re-
 memberest how
 In those old days, one summer noon, 80
 Rose up from out the bosom of the
 lake,
 Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
 derful,
 Holding the sword — and how I row'd
 across
 And took it, and have worn it, like a
 king;
 And, wheresoever I am sung or told
 In aftertime, this also shall be known.
 But now delay not; take Excalibur,
 And fling him far into the middle
 mere;
 Watch what thou seest, and lightly
 bring me word.
 To him replied the bold Sir Bedi-
 vere: 90
 'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee
 thus,
 Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the
 helm.
 A little thing may harm a wounded
 man.
 Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
 Watch what I see, and lightly bring
 thee word.'
 So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he
 stept
 And in the moon athwart the place of
 tombs,
 Where lay the mighty bones of ancient
 men,
 Old knights, and over them the sea-
 wind sang
 Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He,
 stepping down 100

By zigzag paces and juts of pointed
 rock,
 Came on the shining levels of the
 lake.
 There drew he forth the brand Ex-
 calibur,
 And o'er him, drawing it, the winter
 moon,
 Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,
 ran forth
 And sparkled keen with frost against
 the hilt;
 For all the haft twinkled with diamond
 sparks,
 Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-
 work
 Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so
 long
 That both his eyes were dazzled, as he
 stood, 110
 This way and that dividing the swift
 mind,
 In act to throw; but at the last it
 seem'd
 Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
 There in the many-knotted water-flags,
 That whistled stiff and dry about the
 marge.
 So strode he back slow to the wounded
 king.
 Then spake King Arthur to Sir
 Bedivere:
 'Hast thou perform'd my mission
 which I gave?
 What is it thou hast seen, or what
 hast heard?'
 And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-
 vere: 120
 'I heard the ripple washing in the
 reeds,
 And the wild water lapping on the
 crag.'
 To whom replied King Arthur, faint
 and pale:
 'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and
 thy name,
 Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
 Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;
 For surer sign had follow'd, either
 hand,
 Or voice, or else a motion of the
 mere.
 This is a shameful thing for men to
 lie.
 Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go
 again 130

As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring
me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time

Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fix'd in thought;

But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,

How curiously and strangely chased, he smote

His palms together, and he cried aloud:
'And if indeed I cast the brand away,

Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,

Should thus be lost forever from the earth,

Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.

What good should follow this, if this were done?

What harm, undone? deep harm to disobey,

Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand

An act unprofitable, against himself?
The king is sick, and knows not what he does.

What record, or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath

And rumors of a doubt? but were this kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of arms,

Saying, "King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,

Wrought by the lonely maiden of the lake;

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps

Upon the hidden bases of the hills."
So might some old man speak in the aftertime

To all the people, winning reverence;
But now much honor and much fame were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,

And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded king.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:

'What is it thou hast seen, or what hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:

'I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:

'Ah, miserable and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!

Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,

In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.

Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence;

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands.'

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,

And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged

Among the bulrush-beds, and clutch'd the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand

Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,

And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,

Seen where the moving isles of winter shock

By night, with noises of the northern sea.

So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur;
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm

Cloth'd in white samite, mystic, wonderful,

And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the mere.

And lightly went the other to the king.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:

'Now see I by thine eyes that this is done. ²⁰⁰

Speak out; what is it thou hast heard, or seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:

'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems

Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,

Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,

Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,

So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;

But when I look'd again, behold an arm,

Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful, ²¹⁰

That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:

'My end draws nigh; 't is time that I were gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,

And bear me to the margin; yet I fear My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,

And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes ²²⁰

As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,

And would have spoken, but he found not words,

Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,

And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,

Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed

When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the king,

Muttering and murmuring at his ear 'Quick, quick! ²³⁰

I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'

But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,

Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,

Larger than human on the frozen hills. He heard the deep behind him, and a cry

Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.

Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves And barren chasms, and all to left and right

The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based

His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang ²⁴⁰

Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels—

And on a sudden, lo! the level lake, And the long glories of the winter moon.

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,

Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,

Beneath them; and descending they were ware

That all the decks were dense with stately forms

Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream— by these

Three queens with crowns of gold — and from them rose

A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars, ²⁵⁰

And, as it were one voice, an agony Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills

All night in a waste land, where no one comes,

Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me in the barge,'

And to the barge they came. There
 those three queens
 Put forth their hands, and took the
 king, and wept.
 But she that rose the tallest of them all
 And fairest laid his head upon her lap,
 And loosed the shatter'd casque, and
 chafed his hands, ²⁶⁰
 And call'd him by his name, com-
 plaining loud,
 And dropping bitter tears against his
 brow
 Striped with dark blood; for all his
 face was white
 And colorless, and like the wither'd
 moon
 Smote by the fresh beam of the spring-
 ing east;
 And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd
 with drops
 Of onset; and the light and lustrous
 curls—
 That made his forehead like a rising
 sun
 High from the dais-throne—were
 parch'd with dust;
 Or, clotted into points and hanging
 loose, ²⁷⁰
 Mix'd with the knightly growth that
 fringed his lips.
 So like a shatter'd column lay the
 king;
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance
 in rest,
 From spur to plume a star of tourna-
 ment,
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and
 charged
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.
 Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedi-
 vere:
 'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall
 I go?
 Where shall I hide my forehead and
 my eyes?
 For now I see the true old times are
 dead, ²⁸⁰
 When every morning brought a noble
 chance,
 And every chance brought out a noble
 knight.
 Such times have been not since the
 light that led
 The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
 But now the whole ROUND TABLE is
 dissolved

Which was an image of the mighty
 world;
 And I, the last, go forth companion-
 less,
 And the days darken round me, and
 the years,
 Among new men, strange faces, other
 minds,
 And slowly answer'd Arthur from
 the barge: ²⁹⁰
 'The old order changeth, yielding
 place to new,
 And God fulfils himself in many ways,
 Lest one good custom should corrupt
 the world.
 Comfort thyself: what comfort is in
 me?
 I have lived my life, and that which
 I have done
 May He within himself make pure!
 but thou,
 If thou shouldst never see my face
 again,
 Pray for my soul. More things are
 wrought by prayer
 Than this world dreams of. Where-
 fore, let thy voice
 Rise like a fountain for me night and
 day. ³⁰⁰
 For what are men better than sheep or
 goats
 That nourish a blind life within the
 brain,
 If, knowing God, they lift not hands
 of prayer
 Both for themselves and those who
 call them friend?
 For so the whole round earth is every
 way
 Bound by gold chains about the feet
 of God.
 But now farewell. I am going a long
 way
 With these thou seest—if indeed I
 go—
 For all my mind is clouded with a
 doubt—
 To the island-valley of Avilion; ³¹⁰
 Where falls not hail, or rain, or any
 snow,
 Nor ever wind blows loudly, but it
 lies
 Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with or-
 chard lawns
 And bowery hollows crown'd with
 summer sea,

Where I will heal me of my grievous wound.'

So said he, and the barge-with oar and sail

Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood

With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere

Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge
of dawn,

And on the mere the wailing died away.

Here ended Hall, and our last light
that long



'And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against his brow
Striped with dark blood'

Had wink'd and threaten'd darkness,
 flared and fell ;
 At which the parson, sent to sleep with
 sound,
 And waked with silence, grunted
 'Good !' but we
 Sat rapt : it was the tone with which
 he read —
 Perhaps some modern touches here and
 there
 Redeem'd it from the charge of no-
 thingness — 330
 Or else we loved the man, and prized
 his work ;
 I know not ; but we sitting, as I said,
 The cock crew loud, as at that time of
 year
 The lusty bird takes every hour for
 dawn.
 Then Francis, muttering, like a man
 ill-used,
 'There now — that's nothing !' drew
 a little back,
 And drove his heel into the smoulder'd
 log,
 That sent a blast of sparkles up the
 flue.
 And so to bed, where yet in sleep I
 seem'd
 To sail with Arthur under looming
 shores, 340
 Point after point ; till on to dawn,
 when dreams
 Begin to feel the truth and stir of
 day,
 To me, methought, who waited with
 the crowd,
 There came a bark that, blowing for-
 ward, bore
 King Arthur, like a modern gentleman
 Of stateliest port ; and all the people
 cried,
 'Arthur is come again : he cannot die.'
 Then those that stood upon the hills
 behind
 Repeated — 'Come again, and thrice
 as fair ;'
 And, further inland, voices echoed —
 'Come 350
 With all good things, and war shall be
 no more.'
 At this a hundred bells began to peal,
 That with the sound I woke, and heard
 indeed
 The clear church-bells ring in the
 Christmas morn.

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER

'OR, THE PICTURES

This morning is the morning of the
 day,
 When I and Eustace from the city
 went
 To see the Gardener's daughter ; I and
 he,
 Brothers in Art ; a friendship so com-
 plete
 Portion'd in halves between us, that
 we grew
 The fable of the city where we dwelt.
 My Eustace might have sat for Her-
 cules ;
 So muscular he spread, so broad of
 breast.
 He, by some law that holds in love,
 and draws
 The greater to the lesser, long desired
 A certain miracle of symmetry, 11
 A miniature of loveliness, all grace
 Summ'd up and closed in little ; — Ju-
 liet, she
 So light of foot, so light of spirit — O,
 she
 To me myself, for some three careless
 moons,
 The summer pilot of an empty heart
 Unto the shores of nothing ! Know
 you not
 Such touches are but embassies of
 Love,
 To tamper with the feelings, ere he
 found
 Empire for life ? but Eustace painted
 her, 20
 And said to me, she sitting with us
 then,
 'When will *you* paint like this ?' and
 I replied —
 My words were half in earnest, half
 in jest :
 'T is not your work, but Love's.
 Love, unperceived,
 A more ideal artist he than all,
 Came, drew your pencil from you,
 made those eyes
 Darker than darkest pansies, and that
 hair
 More black than ashbuds in the front
 of March.'
 And Juliet answer'd laughing, 'Go
 and see

The Gardener's daughter; trust me,
after that, ³⁰
You scarce can fail to match his mas-
terpiece.'

And up we rose, and on the spur we
went.

Not wholly in the busy world, nor
quite

Beyond it, blooms the garden that I
love.

News from the humming city comes
to it

In sound of funeral or of marriage
bells;

And, sitting muffled in dark leaves,
you hear

The windy clanging of the minster
clock;

Altho' between it and the garden lies
A league of grass, wash'd by a slow

broad stream, ⁴⁰
That, stirr'd with languid pulses of
the oar,

Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge
Crown'd with the minster-towers.

The fields between
Are dewy-fresh, browsed by deep-
udder'd kine,

And all about the large lime feathers
low —

The lime a summer home of murmur-
ous wings.

In that still place she, hoarded in
herself,

Grew, seldom seen; not less among us
lived

Her fame from lip to lip. Who had
not heard ⁵⁰

Of Rose, the Gardener's daughter?
Where was he,

So blunt in memory, so old at heart,
At such a distance from his youth in

grief,
That, having seen, forgot? The com-
mon mouth,

So gross to express delight, in praise
of her

Grew oratory. Such a lord is Love,
And Beauty such a mistress of the

world.
And if I said that Fancy, led by

Love,
Would play with flying forms and

images,
Yet this is also true, that, long before

I look'd upon her, when I heard her
name ⁶¹

My heart was like a prophet to my
heart,

And told me I should love. A crowd
of hopes,

That sought to sow themselves like
winged seeds,

Born out of everything I heard and
saw,

Flutter'd about my senses and my
soul;

And vague desires, like fitful blasts of
balm

To one that travels quickly, made the
air

Of life delicious, and all kinds of
thought,

That verged upon them, sweeter than
the dream ⁷⁰

Dream'd by a happy man, when the
dark East,

Unseen, is brightening to his bridal
morn.

And sure this orbit of the memory
folds

For ever in itself the day we went
To see her. All the land in flowery

squares,
Beneath a broad and equal-blowing

wind,
Smelt of the coming summer, as one

large cloud
Drew downward; but all else of heaven

was pure
Up to the sun, and May from verge to

verge,
And May with me from head to heel.

And now, ⁸⁰
As tho' 't were yesterday, as tho' it were

The hour just flown, that morn with
all its sound —

For those old Mays had thrice the life
of these —

Rings in mine ears. The steer forgot
to graze,

And, where the hedge-row cuts the
pathway, stood,

Leaning his horns into the neighbor
field

And lowing to his fellows. From the
woods

Came voices of the well-contented
doves.

The lark could scarce get out his notes
for joy,

But shook his song together as he
 near'd ⁹⁰
 His happy home, the ground. To left
 and right,
 The cuckoo told his name to all the
 hills;
 The mellow ouzel fluted in the elm;
 The redcap whistled; and the nightin-
 gale
 Sang loud, as tho' he were the bird of
 day.

And Eustace turn'd, and smiling said
 to me:

'Hear how the bushes echo! by my
 life,

These birds have joyful thoughts.

Think you they sing

Like poets, from the vanity of song?

Or have they any sense of why they
 sing? ¹⁰⁰

And would they praise the heavens for
 what they have?'

And I made answer: 'Were there no-
 thing else

For which to praise the heavens but
 only love,

That only love were cause enough for
 praise.'

Lightly he laugh'd, as one that read
 my thought,

And on we went; but ere an hour had
 pass'd,

We reach'd a meadow slanting to the
 North,

Down which a well-worn pathway
 courted us

To one green wicket in a privet
 hedge.

This, yielding, gave into a grassy
 walk ¹¹⁰

Thro' crowded lilac-ambush trimly
 pruned;

And one warm gust, full-fed with per-
 fume, blew

Beyond us, as we enter'd in the cool.
 The garden stretches southward. In

the midst
 A cedar spread his dark-green layers

of shade.
 The garden-glasses shone, and mo-
 mently

The twinkling laurel scatter'd silver
 lights.

'Eustace,' I said, 'this wonder keeps
 the house.'

He nodded, but a moment afterwards

He cried, 'Look! look!' Before he
 ceased I turn'd, ¹²⁰

And, ere a star can wink, beheld her
 there.

For up the porch there grew an
 Eastern rose,

That, flowering high, the last night's
 gale had caught

And blown across the walk. One arm
 aloft—

Gown'd in pure white that fitted to the
 shape—

Holding the bush, to fix it back, she
 stood,

A single stream of all her soft brown
 hair

Pour'd on one side; the shadow of the
 flowers

Stole all the golden gloss, and, waver-
 ing

Lovingly lower, trembled on her
 waist— ¹³⁰

Ah, happy shade!—and still went
 wavering down,

But, ere it touch'd a foot, that might
 have danced

The greensward into greener circles,
 dipt,

And mix'd with shadows of the com-
 mon ground.

But the full day dwelt on her brows,
 and sunn'd

Her violet eyes, and all her Hebe
 bloom,

And doubled his own warmth against
 her lips,

And on the bounteous wave of such a
 breast

As never pencil drew. Half light, half
 shade,

She stood, a sight to make an old man
 young. ¹⁴⁰

So rapt, we near'd the house; but
 she, a Rose

In roses, mingled with her fragrant
 toil,

Nor heard us come, nor from her ten-
 dance turn'd

Into the world without; till close at
 hand,

And almost ere I knew mine own in-
 tent,

This murmur broke the stillness of
 that air

Which brooded round about her:
 'Ah, one rose,

One rose, but one, by those fair fingers
 cull'd,
 Were worth a hundred kisses press'd
 on lips
 Less exquisite than thine.'

She look'd; but all
 Suffused with blushes — neither self-
 possess'd

Nor startled, but betwixt this mood
 and that,

Divided in a graceful quiet — paused,
 And dropt the branch she held, and
 turning wound

Her looser hair in braid, and stirr'd
 her lips

For some sweet answer, tho' no answer
 came,

Nor yet refused the rose, but granted it,
 And moved away, and left me, statue-
 like,

In act to render thanks.

I, that whole day,
 Saw her no more, altho' I linger'd
 there

Till every daisy slept, and Love's white
 star

Beam'd thro' the thicken'd cedar in the
 dusk.

So home we went, and all the live-
 long way

With solemn gibe did Eustace banter
 me.

'Now,' said he, 'will you climb the
 top of art.

You cannot fail but work in hues to
 dim

The Titianic Flora. Will you match
 My Juliet? you, not you, — the mas-
 ter, Love,

A more ideal artist he than all.'

So home I went, but could not sleep
 for joy,

Reading her perfect features in the
 gloom,

Kissing the rose she gave me o'er and
 o'er,

And shaping faithful record of the
 glance

That graced the giving — such a noise
 of life

Swarm'd in the golden present, such a
 voice

Call'd to me from the years to come,
 and such

A length of bright horizon rimm'd the
 dark.

And all that night I heard the watch-
 man peal

The sliding season; all that night I
 heard

The heavy clocks knolling the drowsy
 hours,

The drowsy hours, dispensers of all
 good,

O'er the mute city stole with folded
 wings,

Distilling odors on me as they went
 To greet their fairer sisters of the East.

Love at first sight, first-born, and
 heir to all,

Made this night thus. Henceforward
 squall nor storm

Could keep me from that Eden where
 she dwelt.

Light pretexes drew me: sometimes a
 Dutch love

For tulips; then for roses, moss or
 musk,

To grace my city rooms; or fruits
 and cream

Served in the weeping elm; and more
 and more

A word could bring the color to my
 cheek;

A thought would fill my eyes with
 happy dew;

Love trebled life within me, and with
 each

The year increased.

The daughters of the year,
 One after one, thro' that still garden

pass'd;

Each garlanded with her peculiar
 flower

Danced into light, and died into the
 shade;

And each in passing touch'd with some
 new grace

Or seem'd to touch her, so that day
 by day,

Like one that never can be wholly
 known,

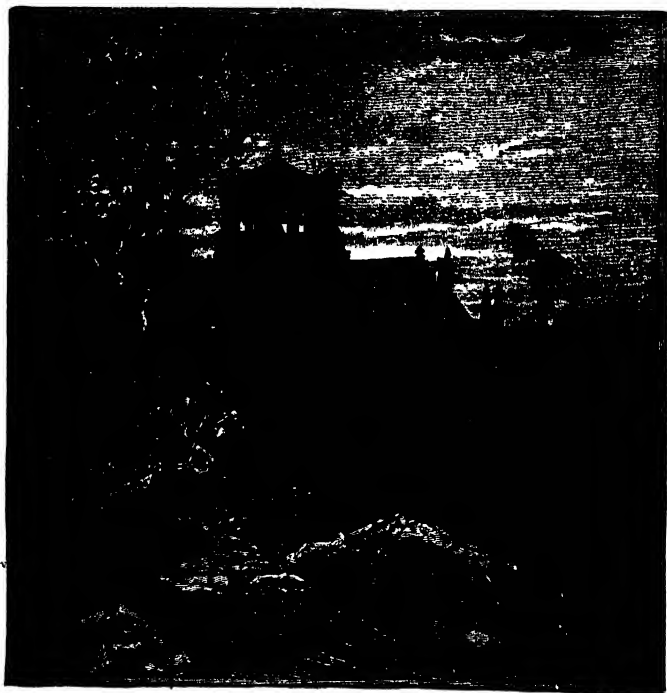
Her beauty grew; till Autumn
 brought an hour

For Eustace, when I heard his deep
 'I will,'

Breathed, like the covenant of a God,
 to hold

From thence thro' all the worlds; but
 I rose up

Full of his bliss, and following her
 dark eyes



'The gray cathedral towers,
Across a hazy glimmer of the west'

<p>Felt earth as air beneath me, till I reach'd The wicket-gate, and found her stand- ing there. There sat we down upon a garden mound, Two mutually enfolded; Love, the third, Between us, in the circle of his arms Enwound us both; and over many a range Of waning lime the gray cathedral towers, Across a hazy glimmer of the west, Reveal'd their shining windows. From them clash'd The bells; we listen'd; with the time we play'd, We spoke of other things; we coursed about</p>	<p>The subject most at heart, more near and near, Like doves about a dovecote, wheel- ing round The central wish, until we settled there. Then, in that time and place, I spoke to her, Requiring, tho' I knew it was mine own, Yet for the pleasure that I took to hear, Requiring at her hand the greatest gift, A woman's heart, the heart of her I loved; And in that time and place she an- swer'd me, And in the compass of three little words,</p>
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More musical than ever came in one,
 The silver fragments of a broken
 voice,
 Made me most happy, faltering, 'I
 am thine.' ²³⁰
 Shall I cease here? Is this enough
 to say
 That my desire, like all strongest
 hopes,
 By its own energy fulfill'd itself,
 Merged in completion? Would you
 learn at full
 How passion rose thro' circumstantial
 grades
 Beyond all grades develop'd? and in-
 deed
 I had not staid so long to tell you
 all,
 But while I mused came Memory with
 sad eyes,
 Holding the folded annals of my
 youth;
 And while I mused, Love with knit
 brows went by, ²⁴⁰
 And with a flying finger swept my
 lips,
 And spake, 'Be wise: not easily for-
 given
 Are those who, setting wide the doors
 that bar
 The secret bridal chambers of the
 heart,
 Let in the day.' Here, then, my
 words have end.
 Yet might I tell of meetings, of
 farewells—
 Of that which came between, more
 sweet than each,
 In whispers, like the whispers of the
 leaves
 That tremble round a nightingale—
 in sighs
 Which perfect Joy, perplex'd for ut-
 terance, ²⁵⁰
 Stole from her sister Sorrow. Might
 I not tell
 Of difference, reconciliation, pledges
 given,
 And vows, where there was never
 need of vows,
 And kisses, where the heart on one
 wild leap
 Hung tranced from all pulsation, as
 above
 The heavens between their fairy
 fleeces pale

Sow'd all their mystic gulfs with
 fleeting stars;
 Or while the balmy glooming, cres-
 cent-lit,
 Spread the light haze along the river-
 shores,
 And in the hollows; or as once we
 met ²⁶⁰
 Unheedful, tho' beneath a whispering
 rain
 Night slid down one long stream of
 sighing wind,
 And in her bosom bore the baby,
 Sleep?
 But this whole hour your eyes have
 been intent
 On that veil'd picture—veil'd, for
 what it holds
 May not be dwelt on by the common
 day.
 This prelude has prepared thee. Raise
 thy soul,
 Make thine heart ready with thine
 eyes; the time
 Is come to raise the veil.
 Behold her there,
 As I beheld her ere she knew my
 heart, ²⁷⁰
 My first, last love; the idol of my
 youth,
 The darling of my manhood, and,
 alas!
 Now the most blessed memory of
 mine age.

DORA

WITH farmer Allan at the farm abode
 William and Dora. William was his
 son,
 And she his niece. He often look'd
 at them,
 And often thought, 'I'll make them
 man and wife.'
 Now Dora felt her uncle's will in all,
 And yearn'd toward William; but
 the youth, because
 He had been always with her in the
 house,
 Thought not of Dora.
 Then there came a day
 When Allan call'd his son, and said:
 'My son,
 I married late, but I would wish to
 see

My grandchild on my knees before I
die;
And I have set my heart upon a
match.
Now therefore look to Dora; she is
well
To look to; thrifty too beyond her
age.
She is my brother's daughter; he
and I
Had once hard words, and parted, and
he died
In foreign lands; but for his sake I
bred
His daughter Dora. Take her for
your wife;
For I have wish'd this marriage, night
and day,
For many years.' But William an-
swer'd short: ²⁰
'I cannot marry Dora; by my life,
I will not marry Dora!' Then the
old man
Was wroth, and doubled up his hands,
and said:
'You will not, boy! you dare to an-
swer thus!
But in my time a father's word was
law,
And so it shall be now for me. Look
to it;
Consider, William, take a month to
think,
And let me have an answer to my
wish,
Or, by the Lord that made me, you
shall pack,
And never more darken my doors
again.'
But William answer'd madly, bit his
lips, ³⁰
And broke away. The more he look'd
at her
The less he liked her; and his ways
were harsh;
But Dora bore them meekly. Then
before
The month was out he left his father's
house,
And hired himself to work within the
fields;
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd
and wed
A laborer's daughter, Mary Morrison.
Then, when the bells were ringing,
Allan call'd

His niece and said: 'My girl, I love
you well;
But if you speak with him that was
my son,
Or change a word with her he calls
his wife,
My home is none of yours. My wil'
is law.'
And Dora promised, being meek. She
thought,
'It cannot be; my uncle's mind will
change!'
And days went on, and there was
born a boy
To William; then distresses came on
him,
And day by day he pass'd his father's
gate,
Heart-broken, and his father help'd
him not.
But Dora stored what little she could
save, ⁵⁰
And sent it them by stealth, nor did
they know
Who sent it; till at last a fever seized
On William, and in harvest time he
died.
Then Dora went to Mary. Mary
sat
And look'd with tears upon her boy,
and thought
Hard things of Dora. Dora came and
said:
'I have obey'd my uncle until now,
And I have sinn'd, for it was all thro'
me
This evil came on William at the
first.
But, Mary, for the sake of him that's
gone, ⁶⁰
And for your sake, the woman that
he chose,
And for this orphan, I am come to you.
You know there has not been for
these five years
So full a harvest. Let me take the
boy,
And I will set him in my uncle's eye
Among the wheat; that when his
heart is glad
Of the full harvest, he may see the
boy,
And bless him for the sake of him
that's gone.'
And Dora took the child, and went
her way

Across the wheat, and sat upon a mound ⁷⁰

That was unsown, where many poppies grew.

Far off the farmer came into the field

And spied her not, for none of all his men

Dare tell him Dora waited with the child ;

And Dora would have risen and gone to him,

But her heart fail'd her ; and the reapers reap'd,

And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

But when the morrow came, she rose and took

The child once more, and sat upon the mound ;

And made a little wreath of all the flowers ⁸⁰

That grew about, and tied it round his hat

To make him pleasing in her uncle's eye.

Then when the farmer pass'd into the field

He spied her, and he left his men at work,

And came and said : 'Where were you yesterday ?

Whose child is that ? What are you doing here ?'

So Dora cast her eyes upon the ground,

And answer'd softly, 'This is William's child !'

'And did I not,' said Allan, 'did I not

Forbid you, Dora ?' Dora said again : 'Do with me as you will, but take

the child, ⁹⁰

And bless him for the sake of him that's gone !'

And Allan said : 'I see it is a trick Got up betwixt you and the woman

there. I must be taught my duty, and by you !

You knew my word was law, and yet you dared

To slight it. Well—for I will take the boy ;

But go you hence, and never see me more.'

So saying, he took the boy that cried aloud

And struggled hard. The wreath of flowers fell ¹⁰⁰

At Dora's feet. She bow'd upon her hands,

And the boy's cry came to her from the field

More and more distant. She bow'd down her head,

Remembering the day when first she came,

And all the things that had been. She bow'd down

And wept in secret ; and the reapers reap'd,

And the sun fell, and all the land was dark.

Then Dora went to Mary's house, and stood

Upon the threshold. Mary saw the boy

Was not with Dora. She broke out in praise ¹¹⁰

To God, that help'd her in her widow-hood.

And Dora said : 'My uncle took the boy ;

But, Mary, let me live and work with you :

He says that he will never see me more.'

Then answer'd Mary : 'This shall never be,

That thou shouldst take my trouble on thyself ;

And, now I think, he shall not have the boy,

For he will teach him hardness, and to slight

His mother. Therefore thou and I will go,

And I will have my boy, and bring him home ; ¹²⁰

And I will beg of him to take thee back.

But if he will not take thee back again,

Then thou and I will live within one house,

And work for William's child, until he grows

Of age to help us.'

So the women kiss'd Each other, and set out, and reach'd the farm.



"I have been to blame — to blame. I have kill'd my son.
I have kill'd him — but I loved him — my dear son"

The door was off the latch; they
peep'd, and saw
The boy set up betwixt his grandsire's
knees,
Who thrust him in the hollows of his
arm,
And clapt him on the hands and on
the cheeks,
Like one that loved him; and the lad
stretch'd out
And babbled for the golden seal, that
hung
From Allan's watch and sparkled by
the fire.
Then they came in; but when the boy
beheld
His mother, he cried out to come to
her;
And Allan set him down, and Mary
said:

'O father! — if you let me call you
so —
I never came a-begging for my-
self,
Or William, or this child; but now I
come
For Dora; take her back, she loves
you well.
O Sir, when William died, he died at
peace
With all men; for I ask'd him, and
he said,
He could not ever rue his marrying
me —
I had been a patient wife; but, Sir,
he said
That he was wrong to cross his father
thus.
"God bless him!" he said, "and may
he never know

The troubles I have gone thro'!"

Then he turn'd

His face and pass'd — unhappy that I am!

But now, Sir, let me have my boy, for you

Will make him hard, and he will learn to slight ¹⁵⁰

His father's memory; and take Dora back,

And let all this be as it was before.'

So Mary said, and Dora hid her face

By Mary. There was silence in the room;

And all at once the old man burst in sobs:

'I have been to blame — to blame.

I have kill'd my son.

I have kill'd him — but I loved him — my dear son.

May God forgive me! — I have been to blame.

Kiss me, my children.'

Then they clung about

The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times. ¹⁶⁰

And all the man was broken with remorse;

And all his love came back a hundred-fold;

And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child

Thinking of William.

So those four abode

Within one house together, and as years

Went forward Mary took another mate;

But Dora lived unmarried till her death.

AUDLEY COURT

'THE Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd, and not a room

For love or money. Let us picnic there

At Audley Court.'

I spoke, while Audley feast Humm'd like a hive all round the narrow quay,

To Francis, with a basket on his arm,

To Francis just alighted from the boat

And breathing of the sea. 'With all my heart,'

Said Francis. Then we shoulder'd thro' the swarm,

And rounded by the stillness of the beach

To where the bay runs up its latest horn. ¹⁰

We left the dying ebb that faintly lipp'd

The flat red granite; so by many a sweep

Of meadow smooth from aftermath we reach'd

The griffin-guarded gates, and pass'd thro' all

The pillar'd dusk of sounding sycamores,

And cross'd the garden to the garden-er's lodge,

With all its casements bedded, and its walls

And chimneys muffled in the leafy vine.

There, on a slope of orchard, Francis laid

A damask napkin wrought with horse and hound, ²⁰

Brought out a dusky loaf that smelt of home,

And, half-cut-down, a pasty costly-made,

Where quail and pigeon, lark and leveret lay,

Like fossils of the rock, with golden yolks

Imbedded and injellied; last, with these,

A flask of cider from his father's vats,

Prime, which I knew; and so we sat and eat

And talk'd old matters over, — who was dead,

Who married, who was like to be, and how

The races went, and who would rent the hall; ³⁰

Then touch'd upon the game, how scarce it was

This season; glancing thence, discuss'd the farm,

The four-field system, and the price of grain;

And struck upon the corn-laws, where we split,

And came again together on the king
With heated faces; till he laugh'd
aloud,

And, while the blackbird on the pip-
pin hung
To hear him, clapt his hand in mine
and sang:

'O, who would fight and march
and countermarch,
Be shot for sixpence in a battle-field, 40
And shovell'd up into some bloody
trench

Where no one knows? but let me live
my life.

'O, who would cast and balance at
a desk,
Perch'd like a crow upon a three-
legg'd stool,

Till all his juice is dried, and all his
joints
Are full of chalk? but let me live my
life.

'Who'd serve the state? for if I
carved my name
Upon the cliffs that guard my native
land,
I might as well have traced it in the
sands:

The sea wastes all; but let me live
my life. 50

'O, who would love? I woo'd a
woman once,
But she was sharper than an eastern
wind,
And all my heart turn'd from her, as
a thorn
Turns from the sea; but let me live
my life.'

He sang his song, and I replied with
mine.
I found it in a volume, all of songs,
Knock'd down to me, when old Sir
Robert's pride,
His books—the more the pity, so I
said—

Came to the hammer here in March—
and this—
I set the words, and added names I
knew: 60

'Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, sleep, and
dream of me:
Sleep, Ellen, folded in thy sister's arm,
And sleeping, haply dream her arm is
mine.

'Sleep, Ellen, folded in Emilia's
arm;

Emilia, fairer than all else but thou,
For thou art fairer than all else that is.

'Sleep, breathing health and peace
upon her breast;
Sleep, breathing love and trust against
her lip.

I go to-night; I come to-morrow
morn.

'I go, but I return; I would I
'were 70
The pilot of the darkness and the
dream.

Sleep, Ellen Aubrey, love, and dream
of me.'

So sang we each to either, Francis
Hale,
The farmer's son, who lived across
the bay,

My friend; and I, that having where-
withal,
And in the fallow leisure of my life
A rolling stone of here and every-
where,

Did what I would. But ere the night
we rose

And saunter'd home beneath a moon
that, just
In crescent, dimly rain'd about the
leaf 80

Twilights of airy silver, till we reach'd
The limit of the hills; and as we sank
From rock to rock upon the glooming
quay,

The town was hush'd beneath us;
lower down

The bay was oily calm; the harbor-
buoy,
Sole star of phosphorescence in the
calm,

With one green sparkle ever and anon
Dipt by itself, and we were glad at
heart.

WALKING TO THE MAIL

John. I'm glad I walk'd. How
fresh the meadows look
Above the river, and, but a month ago,
The whole hillside was redder than a
fox!

Is yon plantation where this byway
joins

The turnpike?

James. Yes.

John. And when does this come by?

James. The mail ? At one o'clock.
John. What is it now ?
James. A quarter to.
John. Whose house is that I see ?
 No, not the County Member's with
 the vane.
 Up higher with the yew-tree by it,
 and half
 A score of gables.
James. That ? Sir Edward Head's.
 But he's abroad ; the place is to be
 sold.
John. O, his ! He was not broken.
James. No, sir, he,
 Vext with a morbid devil in his blood
 That veil'd the world with jaundice,
 hid his face
 From all men, and commercing with
 himself,
 He lost the sense that handles daily
 life—
 That keeps us all in order more or
 less—
 And sick of home went overseas for
 change.
John. And whither ?
James. Nay, who knows ? he's
 here and there.
 But let him go ; his devil goes with
 him,
 As well as with his tenant, Jocky
 Dawes.
John. What's that ?
James. You saw the man — on
 Monday, was it ?—
 There by the humpback'd willow ;
 half stands up
 And bristles, half has fallen and made
 a bridge ;
 And there he caught the younker
 tickling trout—
 Caught *in flagrante*—what's the
 Latin word ?—
Delicto ; but his house, for so they say,
 Was haunted with a jolly ghost, that
 shook
 The curtains, whined in lobbies, tapt
 at doors,
 And rummaged like a rat ; no servant
 stay'd.
 The farmer vext packs up his beds
 and chairs,
 And all his household stuff ; and with
 his boy
 Betwixt his knees, his wife upon the
 tilt,

Sets out, and meets a friend who hails
 him, 'What !
 You're flitting !' 'Yes, we're flit-
 ting,' says the ghost—
 For they had pack'd the thing amon'
 the beds.
 'O, well,' says he, 'you flitting with
 us too !—
 Jack, turn the horses' heads and home
 again.'
John. He left his wife behind ; for
 so I heard.
James. He left her, yes. I met my
 lady once ;
 A woman like a butt, and harsh as
 crabs.
John. O, yet but I remember, ten
 years back—
 'Tis now at least ten years—and then
 she was—
 You could not light upon a sweeter
 thing ;
 A body slight and round, and like a
 pear
 In growing, modest eyes, a hand, a foot
 Lessening in perfect cadence, and a
 skin
 As clean and white as privet when it
 flowers.
James. Ay, ay, the blossom fades,
 and they that loved
 At first like dove and dove were cat
 and dog.
 She was the daughter of a cottager,
 Out of her sphere. What betwixt
 shame and pride,
 New things and old, himself, and her.
 she sour'd
 To what she is ; a nature never kind !
 Like men, like manners ; like breeds
 like, they say.
 Kind nature is the best ; those man-
 ners next
 That fit us like a nature second-hand—
 Which are indeed the manners of the
 great.
John. But I had heard it was this
 bill that past,
 And fear of change at home, that
 drove him hence.
James. That was the last drop in
 the cup of gall.
 I once was near him, when his bailiff
 brought
 A Chartist pike. You should have
 seen him wince

As from a venomous thing; he
 thought himself
 A mark for all, and shudder'd, lest a
 cry
 Should break his sleep by night, and
 his nice eyes
 Should see the raw mechanic's bloody
 thumbs
 Sweat on his blazon'd chairs. But,
 sir, you know
 That these two parties still divide the
 world —
 Of those that want, and those that
 have; and still ⁷⁰
 The same old sore breaks out from
 age to age
 With much the same result. Now I
 myself,
 A Tory to the quick, was as a boy
 Destructive, when I had not what I
 would.
 I was at school, — a college in the
 South.
 There lived a flayflint near; we stole
 his fruit,
 His hens, his eggs; but there was law
 for us;
 We paid in person. He had a sow,
 sir. She,
 With meditative grunts of much con-
 tent,
 Lay great with pig, wallowing in sun
 and mud. ⁸⁰
 By night we dragg'd her to the college
 tower
 From her warm bed, and up the cork-
 screw stair
 With hand and rope we haled the
 groaning sow,
 And on the leads we kept her till she
 pigg'd.
 Large range of prospect had the mother
 sow,
 And but for daily loss of one she loved
 As one by one we took them — but for
 this —
 As never sow was higher in this
 world —
 Might have been happy; but what
 lot is pure?
 We took them all, till she was left
 alone ⁹⁰
 Upon her tower, the Niobe of swine,
 And so return'd unfarrow'd to her sty.
John. They found you out?
James. Not they.

John. Well — after all —
 What know we of the secret of a man?
 His nerves were wrong. What ails us
 who are sound,
 That we should mimic this raw fool
 the world,
 Which charts us all in its coarse blacks
 or whites,
 As ruthless as a baby with a worm,
 As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows
 To pity — more from ignorance than
 will. ¹⁰⁰
 But put your best foot forward, or I
 fear
 That we shall miss the mail; and here
 it comes
 With five at top, as quaint a four-in-
 hand
 As you shall see, — three pyebalds and
 a roan.

EDWIN MORRIS

OR, THE LAKE

O ME, my pleasant rambles by the
 lake,
 My sweet, wild, fresh three quarters
 of a year,
 My one oasis in the dust and drouth
 Of city life! I was a sketcher then.
 See here, my doing: curves of moun-
 tain, bridge,
 Boat, island, ruins of a castle, built
 When men knew how to build, upon a
 rock
 With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock;
 And here, new-comers in an ancient
 hold,
 New-comers from the Mersey, million-
 aires, ¹⁰
 Here lived the Hills — a Tudor-chim-
 ney'd bulk
 Of mellow brickwork on an isle of
 bowers.
 O me, my pleasant rambles by the
 lake
 With Edwin Morris and with Edward
 Bull
 The curate — he was fatter than his
 cure!
 But Edwin Morris, he that knew the
 names,
 Long learned names of agaric, moss,
 and fern,



'When men knew how to build, upon a rock
With turrets lichen-gilded like a rock'

Who forged a thousand theories of the
rocks,
Who taught me how to skate, to row,
to swim,
Who read me rhymes elaborately good,
His own — I call'd him Crichton, for
he seem'd ²¹
All-perfect, finish'd to the finger-nail.
And once I ask'd him of his early
life,
And his first passion; and he answer'd
me,
And well his words became him — was
he not
A full-cell'd honeycomb of eloquence

Stored from all flowers? Poet-like he
spoke:
'My love for Nature is as old
as I;
But thirty moons, one honeymoon to
that,
And three rich sennights more, my love
for her. ³⁰
My love for Nature and my love for
her,
Of different ages, like twin-sisters
grew,
Twin-sisters differently beautiful.
To some full music rose and sank the
sun,

And some full music seem'd to move
and change
With all the varied changes of the
dark,
And either twilight and the day be-
tween;
For daily hope fulfill'd, to rise again
Revolving toward fulfilment, made it
sweet
To walk, to sit, to sleep, to wake, to
breathe.' 40

Or this or something like to this he
spoke.

Then said the fat-faced curate Edward
Bull:

'I take it, God made the woman for
the man,
And for the good and increase of the
world.

A pretty face is well, and this is well,
To have a dame indoors, that trims us
up,

And keeps us tight; but these unreal
ways

Seem but the theme of writers, and
indeed

Worn threadbare. Man is made of
solid stuff.

I say, God made the woman for the
man, 50

And for the good and increase of the
world.'

'Parson,' said I, 'you pitch the pipe
too low.

But I have sudden touches, and can run
My faith beyond my practice into his;
Tho' if, in dancing after Letty Hill,
I do not hear the bells upon my cap,
I scarce have other music — yet say on.
What should one give to light on such
a dream?'

I ask'd him half-sardonically.

'Give?

Give all thou art,' he answer'd, and a
light 60

Of laughter dimpled in his swarthy
cheek;

'I would have hid her needle in my
heart,

To save her little finger from a scratch
No deeper than the skin; my ears
could hear

Her lightest breath; her least remark
was worth

The experience of the wise. I went
and came;

Her voice fled always thro' the sum-
mer land;

I spoke her name alone. Thrice-happy
days!

The flower of each, those moments
when we met,

The crown of all, we met to part no
more.' 70

Were not his words delicious, I a
beast

To take them as I did? but something
jarr'd;

Whether he spoke too largely, that
there seem'd

A touch of something false, some self-
conceit,

Or over-smoothness; howsoe'er it was,
He scarcely hit my humor, and I
said:

'Friend Edwin, do not think your-
self alone

Of all men happy. Shall not Love to
me,

As in the Latin song I learnt at school,
Sneeze out a full God-bless-you right
and left? 80

But you can talk, yours is a kindly
vein;

I have, I think, — Heaven knows, —
as much within;

Have, or should have, but for a thought
or two,

That like a purple beech among the
greens

Looks out of place. 'Tis from no
want in her;

It is my shyness, or my self-dis-
trust,

Or something of a wayward modern
mind

Dissecting passion. Time will set me
right.'

So spoke I, knowing not the things
that were.

Then said the fat-faced curate, Edward
Bull: 90

'God made the woman for the use
of man,

And for the good and increase of the
world.'

And I and Edwin laughed; and now
we paused

About the windings of the marge to
hear

The soft wind blowing over meadowy
holms

And alders, garden-isles; and now we
left

The clerk behind us, I and he, and ran
By ripply shallows of the lipping lake,
Delighted with the freshness and the
sound.

But when the bracken rusted on
their crags, ¹⁰⁰
My suit had wither'd, nipt to death by
him

That was a god, and is a lawyer's clerk,
The rent-roll Cupid of our rainy isles.
'Tis true, we met; one hour I had, no
more:

She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous*
suit,

The close, 'Your Letty, only yours;'
and this

Thrice underscored. The friendly mist
of morn

Clung to the lake. I boated over, ran
My craft aground, and heard with
beating heart

The sweet-gale rustle round the shelv-
ing keel; ¹¹⁰

And out I stept, and up I crept. She
moved,

Like Proserpine in Enna, gathering
flowers.

Then low and sweet I whistled thrice;
and she,

She turn'd, we closed, we kiss'd, swore
faith, I breathed

In some new planet. A silent cousin
stole

Upon us and departed. 'Leave,' she
cried,

'O, leave me!' 'Never, dearest, never:
here

I brave the worst;' and while we stood
like fools

Embracing, all at once a score of pugs
And poodles yell'd within, and out they
came, ¹²⁰

Trustees and aunts and uncles. 'What,
with him!

Go,' shrill'd the cotton-spinning
chorus; 'Him!'

I choked. Again they shriek'd the
burthen, 'Him!'

Again with hands of wild rejection,
'Go! —

Girl, get you in!' She went — and in
one month

They wedded her to sixty thousand
pounds,

To lands in Kent and messuages in
York,

And slight Sir Robert with his watery
smile

And educated whisker. But for me,
They set an ancient creditor to work;
It seems I broke a close with force and
arms: ¹³¹

There came a mystic token from the
king

To greet the sheriff, needless courtesy!
I read, and fled by night, and flying
turn'd;

Her taper glimmer'd in the lake below;
I turn'd once more, close-button'd to
the storm;

So left the place, left Edwin, nor have
seen

Him since, nor heard of her, nor cared
to hear.

Nor cared to hear? perhaps; yet
long ago

I have pardon'd little Letty; not in-
deed, ¹⁴⁰

It may be, for her own dear sake, but
this, —

She seems a part of those fresh days
to me;

For in the dust and drouth of London
life

She moves among my visions of the
lake,

While the prime swallow dips his
wing, or then

While the gold-lily blows, and over-
head

The light cloud smoulders on the sum-
mer crag.

SAINT SIMEON STYLITES

ALTHO' I be the basest of mankind,
From scalp to sole one slough and
crust of sin,

Unfit for earth, unfit for heaven, scarce
meet

For troops of devils, mad with blas-
phemy,

I will not cease to grasp the hope I
hold

Of saintdom, and to clamor, mourn,
and sob,

Battering the gates of heaven with
storms of prayer,

Have mercy, Lord, and take away my
sin!

Let this avail, just, dreadful, mighty
 God,
 This not be all in vain, that thrice ten
 years,¹⁰
 Thrice multiplied by superhuman
 pangs,
 In hungers and in thirsts, fevers and
 cold,
 In coughs, aches, stitches, ulcerous
 throes and cramps,
 A sign betwixt the meadow and the
 cloud,
 Patient on this tall pillar I have
 borne
 Rain, wind, frost, heat, hail, damp,
 and sleet, and snow;
 And I had hoped that ere this period
 closed
 Thou wouldst have caught me up into
 thy rest,
 Denying not these weather-beaten
 limbs
 The meed of saints, the white robe and
 the palm.²⁰
 O, take the meaning, Lord! I do
 not breathe,
 Not whisper, any murmur of com-
 plaint.
 Pain heap'd ten-hundred-fold to this,
 were still
 Less burthen, by ten-hundred-fold, to
 bear,
 Than were those lead-like tons of sin
 that crush'd
 My spirit flat before thee.
 O Lord, Lord,
 Thou knowest I bore this better at the
 first,
 For I was strong and hale of body
 then;
 And tho' my teeth, which now are
 dropt away,
 Would chatter with the cold, and all
 my beard³⁰
 Was tagg'd with icy fringes in the
 moon,
 I drown'd the whoopings of the owl
 with sound
 Of pious hymns and psalms, and some-
 times saw
 An angel stand and watch me, as I
 sang.
 Now am I feeble grown; my end draws
 nigh.
 I hope my end draws nigh; half deaf
 I am,

So that I scarce can hear the people
 hum
 About the column's base, and almost
 blind,
 And scarce can recognize the fields I
 know;
 And both my thighs are rotted with
 the dew;
 Yet cease I not to clamor and to cry,⁴⁰
 While my stiff spine can hold my weary
 head,
 Till all my limbs drop piecemeal from
 the stone,
 Have mercy, mercy! take away my
 sin!
 O Jesus, if thou wilt not save my
 soul,
 Who may be saved? who is it may be
 saved?
 Who may be made a saint if I fail
 here?
 Show me the man hath suffer'd more
 than I.
 For did not all thy martyrs die one
 death?
 For either they were stoned, or cruci-
 fled,⁵⁰
 Or burn'd in fire, or boil'd in oil, or
 sawn
 In twain beneath the ribs; but I die
 here
 To-day, and whole years long, a life
 of death.
 Bear witness, if I could have found a
 way—
 And heedfully I sifted all my
 thought—
 More slowly-painful to subdue this
 home
 Of sin, my flesh, which I despise and
 hate,
 I had not stinted practice, O my God!
 For not alone this pillar-punishment,
 Not this alone I bore; but while I lived
 In the white convent down the valley
 there,⁶¹
 For many weeks about my loins I wore
 The rope that haled the buckets from
 the well,
 Twisted as tight as I could knot the
 noose,
 And spake not of it to a single soul,
 Until the ulcer, eating thro' my skin,
 Betray'd my secret penance, so that all
 My brethren marvell'd greatly. More
 than this

I bore, whereof, O God, thou knowest
all.

Three winters, that my soul might
grow to thee, ⁷⁰

I lived up there on yonder mountain-
side.

My right leg chain'd into the crag, I lay
Pent in a roofless close of ragged
stones;

Inswathed sometimes in wandering
mist, and twice

Black'd with thy branding thunder,
and sometimes

Sucking the damps for drink, and eat-
ing not,

Except the spare chance-gift of those
that came

To touch my body and be heal'd, and
live.

And they say then that I work'd mira-
cles,

Whereof my fame is loud amongst
mankind, ⁸⁰

Cured lameness, palsies, cancers.
Thou, O God,

Knowest alone whether this was or no.
Have mercy, mercy! cover all my sin!

Then, that I might be more alone
with thee,

Three years I lived upon a pillar, high
Six cubits, and three years on one of
twelve;

And twice three years I crouch'd on
one that rose

Twenty by measure; last of all, I grew
Twice ten long weary, weary years to
this,

That numbers forty cubits from the
soil. ⁹⁰

I think that I have borne as much
as this—

Or else I dream—and for so long a
time,

If I may measure time by yon slow
light,

And this high dial, which my sorrow
crowns—

do much—even so.

And yet I know not well,
For that the evil ones come here, and
say,

Fall down, O Simeon; thou hast suf-
fer'd long

For ages and for ages! ' then they prate
Of penances I cannot have gone thro',
Perplexing me with lies; and oft I fall,

Maybe for months, in such blind leth-
argies ¹⁰¹

That Heaven, and Earth, and Time
are choked.

But yet

Bethink thee, Lord, while thou and all
the saints

Enjoy themselves in heaven, and men
on earth

House in the shade of comfortable
roofs,

Sit with their wives by fires, eat whole-
some food,

And wear warm clothes, and even
beasts have stalls,

I, 'tween the spring and downfall of
the light,

Bow down one thousand and two hun-
dred times,

To Christ, the Virgin Mother, and the
saints; ¹¹⁰

Or in the night, after a little sleep,
I wake; the chill stars sparkle; I am

wet
With drenching dews, or stiff with
crackling frost.

I wear an undress'd goatskin on my
back;

A grazing iron collar grinds my neck;
And in my weak, lean arms I lift the

cross,
And strive and wrestle with thee till

I die.

O, mercy, mercy! wash away my
sin!

O Lord, thou knowest what a man
I am;

A sinful man, conceived and born in
sin. ¹²⁰

'Tis their own doing; this is none of
mine;

Lay it not to me. Am I to blame for
this,

That here come those that worship
me? Ha! ha!

They think that I am somewhat.
What am I?

The silly people take me for a saint,
And bring me offerings of fruit and

flowers;

And I, in truth—thou wilt bear wit-
ness here—

Have all in all endured as much, and
more

Than many just and holy men, whose
names

Are register'd and calendar'd for
saints. ¹³⁰

Good people, you do ill to kneel to
me.

What is it I can have done to merit
this?

I am a sinner viler than you all.

It may be I have wrought some mira-
cles,

And cured some halt and maim'd;
but what of that?

It may be no one, even among the
saints,

May match his pains with mine; but
what of that?

Yet do not rise; for you may look on
me,

And in your looking you may kneel
to God.

Speak! is there any of you halt or
maim'd? ¹⁴⁰

I think you know I have some power
with Heaven

From my long penance; let him
speak his wish.

Yes, I can heal him. Power goes
forth from me.

They say that they are heal'd. Ah,
hark! they shout

'Saint Simeon Stylites.' Why, if so,
God reaps a harvest in me. O my
soul,

God reaps a harvest in thee! If this be,
Can I work miracles and not be saved?
This is not told of any. They were
saints.

It cannot be but that I shall be saved,
Yea, crown'd a saint. They shout,
'Behold a saint!' ¹⁵¹

And lower voices saint me from above.
Courage, Saint Simeon! This dull
chrysalis

Cracks into shining wings, and hope
ere death

Spreads more and more and more,
that God hath now

Sponged and made blank of crimeful
record all

My mortal archives.

O my sons, my sons,
I, Simeon of the pillar, by surname
Stylites, among men; I, Simeon,
The watcher on the column till the
end; ¹⁶⁰

I, Simeon, whose brain the sunshine
bakes;

I, whose bald brows in silent hours
become

Unnaturally hoar with rime, do now
From my high nest of penance here
proclaim

That Pontius and Iscariot by my side
Show'd like fair seraphs. On the
coals I lay,

A vessel full of sin; all hell beneath
Made me boil over. Devils pluck'd
my sleeve,

Abaddon and Asmodeus caught at me.
I smote them with the cross, they

swarm'd again. ¹⁷⁰

In bed like monstrous apes they
crush'd my chest;

They flapp'd my light out as I read;
I saw

Their faces grow between me and my
book;

With coltlike whinny and with hog-
gish whine

They burst my prayer. Yet this way
was left,

And by this way I 'scaped them.
Mortify

Your flesh, like me, with scourges
and with thorns;

Smite, shrink not, spare not. If it
may be, fast

Whole Lents, and pray. I hardly,
with slow steps,

With slow, faint steps, and much ex-
ceeding pain, ¹⁸⁰

Have scrambled past those pits of fire,
that still

Sing in mine ears. But yield not me
the praise;

God only thro' his bounty hath
thought fit,

Among the powers and princes of this
world,

To make me an example to mankind,
Which few can reach to. Yet I do

not say
But that a time may come—yea,
even now,

Now, now, his footsteps smite the
threshold stairs

Of life—I say, that time is at the
doors

When you may worship me without
reproach; ¹⁹⁰

For I will leave my relics in your land,
And you may carve a shrine about
my dust,

And burn a fragrant lamp before my
bones,
When I am gather'd to the glorious
saints.

While I spake then, a sting of
shrewdest pain
Ran shrivelling thro' me, and a cloud-
like change,
In passing, with a grosser film made
thick
These heavy, horny eyes. The end!
the end!

Surely the end! What's here? a
shape, a shade,
A flash of light. Is that the angel
there

That holds a crown? Come, blessed
brother, come!

I know thy glittering face. I waited
long;

My brows are ready. What! deny it
now?

Nay, draw, draw, draw nigh. So I
clutch it. Christ!

'Tis gone; 'tis here again; the crown!
the crown!

So now 'tis fitted on and grows to me,
And from it melt the dews of Paradise,
Sweet! sweet! spikenard, and balm,
and frankincense.

Ah! let me not be fool'd, sweet saints;
I trust

That I am whole, and clean, and meet
for Heaven.

Speak, if there be a priest, a man
of God,

Among you there, and let him pre-
sently

Approach, and lean a ladder on the
shaft,

And climbing up into my airy home,
Deliver me the blessed sacrament;
For by the warning of the Holy Ghost,
I prophesy that I shall die to-night,
A quarter before twelve.

But thou, O Lord,
Aid all this foolish people; let them
take

Example, pattern; lead them to thy
light.

THE TALKING OAK

ONCE more the gate behind me falls;
Once more before my face

I see the moulder'd Abbey-walls,
That stand within the chace.

Beyond the lodge the city lies,
Beneath its drift of smoke;
And ah! with what delighted eyes
I turn to yonder oak.

For when my passion first began,
Ere that which in me burn'd,
The love that makes me thrice a man,
Could hope itself return'd,

To yonder oak within the field
I spoke without restraint,
And with a larger faith appeal'd
Than Papist unto Saint.

For oft I talk'd with him apart,
And told him of my choice,
Until he plagiarized a heart,
And answer'd with a voice.

Tho' what he whisper'd under heaven
None else could understand,
I found him garrulously given,
A babbler in the land.

But since I heard him make reply
Is many a weary hour;
'T were well to question him, and try
If yet he keeps the power.

Hail, hidden to the knees in fern,
Broad Oak of Sumner-chace,
Whose topmost branches can discern
The roofs of Sumner-place!

Say thou, whereon I carved her name,
If ever maid or spouse,
As fair as my Olivia, came
To rest beneath thy boughs.

'O Walter, I have shelter'd here
Whatever maiden grace
The good old summers, year by year,
Made ripe in Sumner-chace;

'Old summers, when the monk was
fat,
And, issuing shorn and sleek,
Would twist his girdle tight, and pat
The girls upon the cheek,

'Ere yet, in scorn of Peter's-pence,
And number'd bead, and shrift,

Bluff Harry broke into the spence
And turn'd the cowl's adrift.

'And I have seen some score of those
Fresh faces that would thrive ⁵⁰
When his man-minded offset rose
To chase the deer at five;

'And all that from the town would
stroll,
Till that wild wind made work
In which the gloomy brewer's soul
Went by me, like a stork;

'The slight she-slips of loyal blood,
And others, passing praise,
Strait-laced, but all-too-full in bud
For puritanic stays. ⁶⁰

'And I have shadow'd many a group
Of beauties that were born

In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn;

'And, leg and arm with love-knots gay,
About me leap'd and laugh'd
The modish Cupid of the day,
And shrill'd his tinsel shaft.

'I swear — and else may insects prick
Each leaf into a gall! — ⁷⁰
This girl, for whom your heart is sick,
Is three times worth them all;

'For those and theirs, by Nature's law,
Have faded long ago;
But in these latter springs I saw
Your own Olivia blow,

'From when she gamboll'd on the
greens
A baby-germ, to when



'And I have shadow'd many a group
Of beauties that were born
In teacup-times of hood and hoop,
Or while the patch was worn'

The maiden blossoms of her teens
 Could number five from ten. 80

'I swear, by leaf, and wind, and rain—
 And hear me with thine ears—
 That, tho' I circle in the grain
 Five hundred rings of years,

'Yet, since I first could cast a shade,
 Did never creature pass
 So slightly, musically made,
 So light upon the grass;

'For as to fairies, that will flit
 To make the greensward fresh, 90
 I hold them exquisitely knit,
 But far too spare of flesh.'

O, hide thy knotted knees in fern,
 And overlook the chace,
 And from thy topmost branch discern
 The roofs of Sumner-place!

But thou, whereon I carved her name,
 That oft hast heard my vows,
 Declare when last Olivia came
 To sport beneath thy boughs. 100

'O, yesterday, you know, the fair
 Was holden at the town;
 Her father left his good arm-chair,
 And rode his hunter down.

'And with him Albert came on his.
 I look'd at him with joy;
 As cowslip unto oxlip is,
 So seems she to the boy.

'An hour had past—and, sitting
 straight
 Within the low-wheel'd chaise, 110
 Her mother trundled to the gate
 Behind the dappled grays.

'But as for her, she staid at home,
 And on the roof she went,
 And down the way you used to come,
 She look'd with discontent.

'She left the novel half-uncut
 Upon the rosewood shelf;
 She left the new piano shut;
 She could not please herself. 120

Then ran she, gamesome as the colt,
 And livelier than a lark

She sent her voice thro' all the holt
 Before her, and the park.

'A light wind chased her on the wing,
 And in the chase grew wild,
 As close as might be would he cling
 About the darling child;

'But light as any wind that blows
 So fleetly did she stir, 130
 The flower she touch'd on dipt and
 rose,
 And turn'd to look at her.

'And here she came, and round me
 play'd,
 And sung to me the whole
 Of those three stanzas that you made
 About my "giant bole;"

'And in a fit of frolic mirth
 She strove to span my waist.
 Alas! I was so broad of girth,
 I could not be embraced. 140

'I wish'd myself the fair young beech
 That here beside me stands,
 That round me, clasping each in each,
 She might have lock'd her hands.

'Yet seem'd the pressure thrice as
 sweet
 As woodbine's fragile hold,
 Or when I feel about my feet
 The berried briony fold.'

O, muffle round thy knees with fern,
 And shadow Sumner-chace! 150
 Long may thy topmost branch discern
 The roofs of Sumner-place!

But tell me, did she read the name
 I carved with many vows
 When last with throbbing heart I came
 To rest beneath thy boughs?

'O, yes, she wander'd round and round
 These knotted knees of mine,
 And found, and kiss'd the name she
 found,
 And sweetly murmur'd thine. 160

'A teardrop trembled from its source,
 And down my surface crept.
 My sense of touch is something coarse.
 But I believe she wept.

'Then flush'd her cheek with rosy
light,
She glanced across the plain,
But not a creature was in sight;
She kiss'd me once again.

'Her kisses were so close and kind
That, trust me on my word, 170
Hard wood I am, and wrinkled rind,
But yet my sap was stirr'd;

'And even into my inmost ring
A pleasure I discern'd,
Like those blind motions of the spring
That show the year is turn'd.

'Thrice-happy he that may caress
The ringlet's waving balm —
The cushions of whose touch may press
The maiden's tender palm. 180

'I, rooted here among the groves,
But languidly adjust
My vapid vegetable loves
With anthers and with dust;

'For ah! my friend, the days were brief
Whereof the poets talk,
When that which breathes within the
leaf
Could slip its bark and walk.

'But could I, as in times foregone,
From spray and branch and stem 190
Have suck'd and gather'd into one
The life that spreads in them,

'She had not found me so remiss;
But lightly issuing thro',
I would have paid her kiss for kiss,
With usury thereto.'

O, flourish high, with leafy towers,
And overlook the lea!
Pursue thy loves among the bowers,
But leave thou mine to me. 200

O, flourish, hidden deep in fern,
Old oak, I love thee well!
A thousand thanks for what I learn
And what remains to tell.

'Tis little more: the day was warm;
At last, tired out with play,
She sank her head upon her arm
And at my feet she lay.

'Her eyelids dropp'd their silken eaves.
I breathed upon her eyes 210
Thro' all the summer of my leaves
A welcome mix'd with sighs.

'I took the swarming sound of life —
The music from the town —
The murmurs of the drum and fife,
And lull'd them in my own.

'Sometimes I let a sunbeam slip,
To light her shaded eye;
A second flutter'd round her lip
Like a golden butterfly; 220

'A third would glimmer on her neck
To make the necklace shine;
Another slid, a sunny fleck,
From head to ankle fine.

'Then close and dark my arms I
spread,
And shadow'd all her rest —
Dropt dew upon her golden head,
An acorn in her breast.

'But in a pet she started up,
And pluck'd it out, and drew 230
My little oakling from the cup,
And flung him in the dew.

'And yet it was a graceful gift —
I felt a pang within
As when I see the woodman lift
His axe to slay my kin.

'I shook him down because he was
The finest on the tree.
He lies beside thee on the grass.
O, kiss him once for me! 240

'O, kiss him twice and thrice for me,
That have no lips to kiss!
For never yet was oak on lea
Shall grow so fair as this.'

Step deeper yet in herb and fern,
Look further thro' the chace,
Spread upward till thy boughs dis-
cern
The front of Sumner-place.

This fruit of thine by Love is blest.
That but a moment lay 250
Where fairer fruit of Love may rest
Some happy future day.



'She, Dryad-like, shall wear
Alternate leaf and acorn-ball'

I kiss it twice, I kiss it thrice,
The warmth it thence shall win
To riper life may magnetize
The baby-oak within.

But thou, while kingdoms overset,
Or lapse from hand to hand,
Thy leaf shall never fail, nor yet
Thine acorn in the land. 260

May never saw dismember thee,
Nor wielded axe disjoint,
That art the fairest-spoken tree
From here to Lizard-point.

O, rock upon thy towery top
All throats that gurgle sweet !
All starry culmination drop
Balm-dews to bathe thy feet !

All grass of silky feather grow —
And while he sinks or swells 270
The full south-breeze around thee blow
The sound of minster bells !

The fat earth feed thy branchy root,
That under deeply strikes !
The northern morning o'er thee shoot,
High up, in silver spikes !

Nor ever lightning char thy grain,
But, rolling as in sleep,
Low thunders bring the mellow rain,
That makes thee broad and deep ! 280

And hear me swear a solemn oath,
That only by thy side
Will I to Olive plight my troth,
And gain her for my bride.

And when my marriage morn may fall,
 She, Dryad-like, shall wear
 Alternate leaf and acorn-ball
 In wreath about her hair.

And I will work in prose and rhyme,
 And praise thee more in both ²⁹⁰
 Than bard has honor'd beech or lime,
 Or that Thessalian growth

In which the swarthy ringdove sat,
 And mystic sentence spoke ;
 And more than England honors that,
 Thy famous brother-oak,

Wherein the younger Charles abode .
 Till all the paths were dim,
 And far below the Roundhead rode,
 And humm'd a surly hymn. ³⁰⁰

LOVE AND DUTY

Of love that never found his earthly
 close,
 What sequel ? Streaming eyes and
 breaking hearts ?
 Or all the same as if he had not been ?
 Not so. Shall Error in the round
 of time

Still father Truth ? O, shall the brag-
 gart shout
 For some blind glimpse of freedom
 work itself
 Thro' madness, hated by the wise, to
 law,
 System, and empire ? Sin itself be
 found

The cloudy porch oft opening on the
 sun ?
 And only he, this wonder, dead, be-
 come ¹⁰
 Mere highway dust ? or year by year
 alone

Sit brooding in the ruins of a life,
 Nightmare of youth, the spectre of
 himself ?

If this were thus, if this, indeed,
 were all,
 Better the narrow brain, the stony
 heart,

The staring eye glazed o'er with sap-
 less days,

The long mechanic pacings to and fro,
 The set gray life, and apathetic end,
 But am I not the nobler thro' thy love ?

O, three times less unworthy ! like-
 wise thou ²⁰

Art more thro' Love, and greater than
 thy years,

The sun will run his orbit, and the
 moon

Hier circle. Wait, and Love himself
 will bring

The drooping flower of knowledge
 changed to fruit

Of wisdom. Wait ; my faith is large
 in Time,

And that which shapes it to some per-
 fect end.

Will some one say, Then why not
 ill for good ?

Why took ye not your pastime ? To
 that man

My work shall answer, since I knew
 the right

And did it ; for a man is not as God, ³⁰
 But then most Godlike being most a
 man.—

So let me think 't is well for thee and
 me —

Ill-fated that I am, what lot is mine
 Whose foresight preaches peace, my
 heart so slow

To feel it ! For how hard it seem'd
 to me,

When eyes, love-languid thro' half
 tears, would dwell

One earnest, earnest moment upon
 mine,

Then not to dare to see ! when thy
 low voice,

Faltering, would break its syllables,
 to keep

My own full-tuned, — hold passion in
 a leash, ⁴⁰

And not leap forth and fall about thy
 neck,

And on thy bosom — deep desired re-
 lief ! —

Rain out the heavy mist of tears, that
 weigh'd

Upon my brain, my senses, and my
 soul !

For Love himself took part against
 himself

To warn us off, and Duty loved of
 Love —

O, this world's curse — beloved but
 hated — came

Like Death betwixt thy dear embrace
 and mine,

And crying, 'Who is this? behold
thy bride,'
She push'd me from thee.

If the sense is hard
To alien ears, I did not speak to
these—
No, not to thee, but to thyself in me.
Hard is my doom and thine; thou
knowest it all.

Could Love part thus? was it not
well to speak,
To have spoken once? It could not
but be well.

The slow sweet hours that bring us
all things good,
The slow sad hours that bring us all
things ill,

And all good things from evil, brought
the night

In which we sat together and alone,
And to the want that hollow'd all the
heart

Gave utterance by the yearning of an
eye,
That burn'd upon its object thro'
such tears

As flow but once a life.
The trance gave way
To those caresses, when a hundred
times

In that last kiss, which never was the
last,

Farewell, like endless welcome, lived
and died.

Then follow'd counsel, comfort, and
the words

That make a man feel strong in speak-
ing truth;

Till now the dark was worn, and over-
head

The lights of sunset and of sunrise
mix'd

In that brief night, the summer night,
that paused

Among her stars to hear us, stars that
hung

Love-charm'd to listen; all the wheels
of Time

Spun round in station, but the end
had come.

O, then, like those who clench their
nerves to rush

Upon their dissolution, we two rose,
There—closing like an individual
life—

In one blind cry of passion and of pain,

Like bitter accusation even to death,
Caught up the whole of love and utter'd
it,

And bade adieu for ever.

Live—yet live—
Shall sharpest pathos blight us, know-
ing all

Life needs for life is possible to
will?—

Live happy; tend thy flowers; be
tended by

My blessing! Should my Shadow
cross thy thoughts

Too sadly for their peace, remand it
thou

For calmer hours to Memory's darkest
hold,

If not to be forgotten—not at once—
Not all forgotten. Should it cross thy
dreams,

O, might it come like one that looks
content,

With quiet eyes unfaithful to the truth,
And point thee forward to a distant
light,

Or seem to lift a burthen from thy
heart

And leave thee freer, till thou wake
refresh'd

Then when the first low matin-chirp
hath grown

Full quire, and morning driven her
plow of pearl

Far furrowing into light the mounded
rack,

Beyond the fair green field and eastern
sea.

THE GOLDEN YEAR

WELL, you shall have that song which
Leonard wrote:

It was last summer on a tour in Wales.
Old James was with me; we that day
had been

Up Snowdon; and I wish'd for Leon-
ard there,

And found him in Llanberis. Then
we crost

Between the lakes, and clamber'd half-
way up

The counter side; and that same song
of his

He told me, for I banter'd him and
swore

They said he lived shut up within himself,

A tongue-tied poet in the feverous days

That, setting the *how much* before the *how*,

Cry, like the daughters of the horse-leech, 'Give,

Cram us with all,' but count not me the herd!

To which 'They call me what they will,' he said:

'But I was born too late; the fair new forms,

That float about the threshold of an age,

Like truths of Science waiting to be caught—

Catch me who can, and make the catcher crown'd—

Are taken by the forelock. Let it be.

But if you care indeed to listen, hear These measured words, my work of yester-morn:

'We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move;

The sun flies forward to his brother sun;

The dark earth follows wheel'd in her ellipse;

And human things returning on themselves

Move onward, leading up the golden year.

'Ah! tho' the times when some new thought can bud

Are but as poets' seasons when they flower,

Yet seas that daily gain upon the shore Have ebb and flow conditioning their march,

And slow and sure comes up the golden year;

'When wealth no more shall rest in mounded heaps,

But smit with freer light shall slowly melt

In many streams to fatten lower lands, And light shall spread, and man be liker man

Thro' all the season of the golden year.

'Shall eagles not be eagles? wrens be wrens?

If all the world were falcons, what of that?

The wonder of the eagle were the less, But he not less the eagle. Happy

days

Roll onward, leading up the golden year.

'Fly, happy, happy sails, and bear the Press;

Fly happy with the mission of the Cross;

Knit land to land, and blowing havenward

With silks, and fruits, and spices, clear of toll,

Enrich the markets of the golden year.

'But we grow old. Ah! when shall all men's good

Be each man's rule, and universal Peace

Lie like a shaft of light across the land,

And like a lane of beams athwart the sea,

Thro' all the circle of the golden year?' Thus far he flow'd, and ended; whereupon

'Ah, folly!' in mimic cadence answer'd James—

'Ah, folly! for it lies so far away, Not in our time, nor in our children's time,

'Tis like the second world to us that live;

'T were all as one to fix our hopes on heaven

As on this vision of the golden year.' With that he struck his staff against the rocks

And broke it,—James,—you know him,—old, but full

Of force and choler, and firm upon his feet,

And like an oaken stock in winter woods,

O'erflourish'd with the hoary clematis; Then added, all in heat:

'What stuff is this! Old writers push'd the happy season back,—

The more fools they,—we forward; dreamers both—

You most, that, in an age when every hour

Must sweat her sixty minutes to the death,

Live on, God love us, as if the seeds man, rapt

Upon the teeming harvest, should not
plunge
His hand into the bag; but well I⁷⁰
know
That unto him who works, and feels
he works,
This same grand year is ever at the
doors.'

He spoke; and, high above, I heard
them blast
The steep slate-quarry, and the great
echo flap
And buffet round the hills, from bluff
to bluff.

ULYSSES

Ir little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these bar-
ren crags,

Match'd with an aged wife, I mete
and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and
know not me.

I cannot rest from travel; I will drink
Life to the lees. All times I have
enjoy'd

Greatly, have suffer'd greatly, both
with those

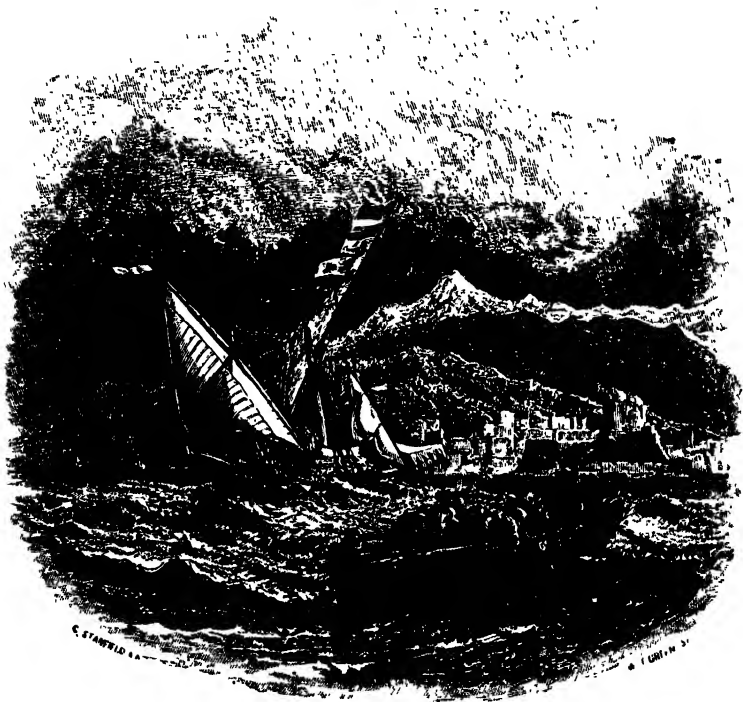
That loved me, and alone; on shore,
and when

Thro' scudding drifts the rainy
Hyades¹⁰

Vext the dim sea. I am become a
name;

For always roaming with a hungry
heart

Much have I seen and known, — cities
of men



'There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail;
There gloom the dark, broad seas'

And manners, climates, councils, governments,
 Myself not least, but honor'd of them all, —
 And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
 Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
 I am a part of all that I have met;
 Yet all experience is an arch where-thro'
 Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades²⁰
 For ever and for ever when I move.
 How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
 To rust unburnish'd, not to shine in use!
 As tho' to breathe were life! Life piled on life
 Were all too little, and of one to me
 Little remains; but every hour is saved
 From that eternal silence, something more,
 A bringer of new things; and vile it were
 For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
 And this gray spirit yearning in desire³⁰
 To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
 Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
 This is my son, mine own Telema-chus,
 To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle, —
 Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
 This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
 A rugged people, and thro' soft degrees
 Subdue them to the useful and the good.
 Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
 Of common duties, decent not to fail⁴⁰
 In offices of tenderness, and pay
 Meet adoration to my household gods,
 When I am gone. He works his work,
 I mine.
 There lies the port; the vessel puffs
 her sail;

There gloom the dark, broad seas.
 My mariners,
 Souls that have toil'd, and wrought,
 and thought with me, —
 That ever with a frolic welcome took
 The thunder and the sunshine, and
 opposed
 Free hearts, free foreheads, — you and
 I are old;
 Old age hath yet his honor and his
 toil.
 Death closes all; but something ere⁵⁰
 the end,
 Some work of noble note, may yet be
 done,
 Not unbecoming men that strove with
 Gods.
 The lights begin to twinkle from the
 rocks;
 The long day wanes; the slow moon
 climbs; the deep
 Moans round with many voices.
 Come, my friends.
 'T is not too late to seek a newer
 world.
 Push off, and sitting well in order
 smite
 The sounding furrows; for my pur-
 pose holds
 To sail beyond the sunset, and the
 baths⁶⁰
 Of all the western stars, until I die.
 It may be that the gulfs will wash us
 down;
 It may be we shall touch the Happy
 Isles,
 And see the great Achilles, whom we
 knew.
 Tho' much is taken, much abides;
 and tho'
 We are not now that strength which
 in old days
 Moved earth and heaven, that which
 we are, we are, —
 One equal temper of heroic hearts,
 Made weak by time and fate, but
 strong in will
 To strive, to seek, to find, and not to
 yield.⁷⁰

TITHONUS

THE woods decay, the woods decay
 and fall,
 The vapors weep their burthen to the
 ground,

Man comes and tills the field and lies
 bencath,
 And after many a summer dies the
 swan.
 Me only cruel immortality
 Consumes; I wither slowly in thine
 arms,
 Here at the quiet limit of the world,
 A white-hair'd shadow roaming like a
 dream
 The ever-silent spaces of the East,
 Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls
 of morn. ¹⁰
 Alas! for this gray shadow, once a
 man —
 So glorious in his beauty and thy
 choice,
 Who madest him thy chosen, that he
 seem'd
 To his great heart none other than a
 God!
 I ask'd thee, 'Give me immortality.'
 Then didst thou grant mine asking
 with a smile,
 Like wealthy men who care not how
 they give.
 But thy strong Hours indignant work'd
 their wills,
 And beat me down and marr'd and
 wasted me,
 And tho' they could not end me, left
 me maim'd ²⁰
 To dwell in presence of immortal
 youth,
 Immortal age beside immortal youth,
 And all I was in ashes. Can thy
 love,
 Thy beauty, make amends, tho' even
 now,
 Close over us, the silver star, thy
 guide,
 Shines in those tremulous eyes that
 fill with tears
 To hear me? Let me go; take back
 thy gift.
 Why should a man desire in any way
 To vary from the kindly race of men,
 Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance ³⁰
 Where all should pause, as is most
 meet for all?
 A soft air fans the cloud apart;
 there comes
 A glimpse of that dark world where I
 was born.
 Once more the old mysterious glim-
 mer steals

From thy pure brows, and from thy
 shoulders pure,
 And bosom beating with a heart re-
 new'd.
 Thy cheek begins to redden thro' the
 gloom,
 Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close
 to mine,
 Ere yet they blind the stars, and the
 wild team
 Which love thee, yearning for thy
 yoke, arise, ⁴⁰
 And shake the darkness from their
 loosen'd manes,
 And beat the twilight into flakes of
 fire.
 Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
 In silence, then before thine answer
 given
 Departest, and thy tears are on my
 cheek.
 Why wilt thou ever scare me with
 thy tears,
 And make me tremble lest a saying
 learnt,
 In days far off, on that dark earth, be
 true?
 'The Gods themselves cannot recall
 their gifts.'
 Ay me! ay me! with what an-
 other heart ⁵⁰
 In days far-off, and with what other
 eyes
 I used to watch — if I be he that
 watch'd —
 The lucid outline forming round thee;
 saw
 The dim curls kindle into sunny
 rings;
 Changed with thy mystic change, and
 felt my blood
 Glow with the glow that slowly crim-
 son'd all
 Thy presence and thy portals, while I
 lay,
 Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing
 dewy-warm
 With kisses balmier than half-opening
 buds
 Of April, and could hear the lips that
 kiss'd ⁶⁰
 Whispering I knew not what of wild
 and sweet,
 Like that strange song I heard Apollo
 sing,
 While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine
 East ;
 How can my nature longer mix with
 thine ?
 Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me,
 cold
 Are all thy lights, and cold my
 wrinkled feet
 Upon thy glimmering thresholds,
 when the steam
 Floats up from those dim fields about
 the homes
 Of happy men that have the power to
 die, ⁷⁰
 And grassy barrows of the happier
 dead.
 Release me, and restore me to the
 ground.
 Thou seest all things, thou wilt see
 my grave ;
 Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by
 morn,
 I earth in earth forget these empty
 courts,
 And thee returning on thy silver
 wheels.

LOCKSLEY HALL

COMRADES, leave me here a little,
 while as yet 't is early morn ;
 Leave me here, and when you want
 me, sound upon the bugle-
 horn.

'T is the place, and all around it, as of
 old, the curlews call,
 Dreary gleams about the moorland
 flying over Locksley Hall ;

Locksley Hall, that in the distance
 overlooks the sandy tracts,
 And the hollow ocean-ridges roaring
 into cataracts.

Many a night from yonder ivied case-
 ment, ere I went to rest,
 Did I look on great Orion sloping
 slowly to the west.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, ris-
 ing thro' the mellow shade,
 Glitter like a swarm of fireflies tangled
 in a silver braid. ¹⁰

Here about the beach I wander'd,
 nourishing a youth sublime
 With the fairy tales of science, and
 the long result of time ;

When the centuries behind me like a
 fruitful land reposed ;
 When I clung to all the present for
 the promise that it closed ;

When I dipt into the future far as
 human eye could see,
 Saw the vision of the world and all
 the wonder that would be.—

In the spring a fuller crimson comes
 upon the robin's breast ;
 In the spring the wanton lapwing gets
 himself another crest ;

In the spring a livelier iris changes on
 the burnish'd dove ;
 In the spring a young man's fancy
 lightly turns to thoughts of
 love. ²⁰

Then her cheek was pale and thinner
 than should be for one so
 young,
 And her eyes on all my motions with
 a mute observance hung.

And I said, 'My cousin Amy, speak,
 and speak the truth to me,
 Trust me, cousin, all the current of
 my being sets to thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came
 a color and a light,
 As I have seen the rosy red flushing
 in the northern night.

And she turn'd—her bosom shaken
 with a sudden storm of sighs—
 All the spirit deeply dawning in the
 dark of hazel eyes—

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, fear-
 ing they should do me wrong ;'
 Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin ?'
 weeping, 'I have loved thee
 long.' ³⁰

Love took up the glass of Time,
 and turn'd it in his glowing
 hands :



'Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 't is early morn'

Every moment, lightly shaken, ran
itself in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and
smote on all the chords with
might;

Smote the chord of Self, that, trem-
bling, past in music out of
sight.

Many a morning on the moorland did
we hear the corses ring,
And her whisper throng'd my pulses
with the fulness of the spring.

Many an evening by the waters did
we watch the stately ships,
And our spirits rush'd together at the
touching of the lips.

O my cousin, shallow-hearted! O
my Amy, mine no more!

O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the
barren, barren shore! 40

Falser than all fancy fathoms, falser
than all songs have sung,
Puppet to a father's threat, and servile
to a shrewish tongue!

Is it well to wish thee happy?—hav-
ing known me—to decline
On a range of lower feelings and a
narrower heart than mine!

Yet it shall be; thou shalt lower to his
level day by day,
What is fine within thee growing coarse
to sympathize with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is; thou
art mated with a clown,
And the grossness of his nature will
have weight to drag thee down.

He will hold thee, when his passion
shall have spent its novel force,
Something better than his dog, a little
dearer than his horse. 50

What is this? his eyes are heavy; think
not they are glazed with wine.
Go to him, it is thy duty; kiss him;
take his hand in thine.

It may be my lord is weary, that his
brain is overwrought;
Soothe him with thy finer fancies,
touch him with thy lighter
thought.

He will answer to the purpose, easy
things to understand —
Better thou wert dead before me,
tho' I slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden
from the heart's disgrace,
Roll'd in one another's arms, and silent
in a last embrace.

Cursed be the social wants that sin
against the strength of youth!
Cursed be the social lies that warp us
from the living truth! 60

Cursed be the sickly forms that err
from honest Nature's rule!
Cursed be the gold that gilds the
straiten'd forehead of the fool!

Well — 'tis well that I should bluster!
— Hadst thou less un-
worthy proved —
Would to God — for I had loved thee
more than ever wife was loved.

Am I mad, that I should cherish that
which bears but bitter fruit?
I will pluck it from my bosom, tho'
my heart be at the root.

Never, tho' my mortal summers to such
length of years should come
As the many-winter'd crow that leads
the clanging rookery home.

Where is comfort? in division of the
records of the mind?
Can I part her from herself, and love
her, as I knew her, kind? 70

I remember one that perish'd; sweetly
did she speak and move;
Such a one do I remember, whom to
look at was to love.

Can I think of her as dead, and love
her for the love she bore?
No — she never loved me truly; love
is love for evermore.

Comfort? comfort scorn'd of devils!
this is truth the poet sings,
That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is
remembering happier things.

Drug thy memories, lest thou learn
it, lest thy heart be put to
proof,
In the dead unhappy night, and when
the rain is on the roof.

Like a dog, he hunts in dreams, and
thou art staring at the wall,
Where the dying night-lamp flick-
ers, and the shadows rise and
fall. 80

Then a hand shall pass before thee,
pointing to his drunken sleep,
To thy widow'd marriage-pillows, to
the tears that thou wilt weep.

Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,'
whisper'd by the phantom years,
And a song from out the distance in
the ringing of thine ears;

And an eye shall vex thee, looking
ancient kindness on thy pain.
Turn thee, turn thee on thy pillow;
get thee to thy rest again.

Nay, but Nature brings thee solace;
for a tender voice will cry.
'Tis a purer life than thine, a lip to
drain thy trouble dry.

Baby lips will laugh me down; my
latest rival brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me
from the mother's breast. 90

O, the child too clothes the father
with a dearness not his due.
Half is thine and half is his; it will
be worthy of the two.

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to
thy petty part,
With a little hoard of maxims preach-
ing down a daughter's heart.

What is that which I should turn to,
lighting upon days like these?
Every door is barr'd with gold, and
opens but to golden keys. 100

Every gate is throng'd with suitors,
all the markets overflow.
I have but an angry fancy; what is
that which I should do?



'Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships'

'They were dangerous guides the feel-
ings—she herself was not ex-
empt—
Truly, she herself had suffer'd'—Per-
ish in thy self-contempt!

Overlive it—lower yet—be happy!
wherefore should I care?
I myself must mix with action, lest I
wither by despair.

I had been content to perish, falling
on the foeman's ground,
When the ranks are roll'd in vapor,
and the winds are laid with
sound.

But the jingling of the guinea helps
the hurt that Honor feels,
And the nations do but murmur, snarl-
ing at each other's heels.

Can I but relive in sadness? I will
turn that earlier page.

Hide me from my deep emotion, O
thou wondrous Mother-Age!

Make me feel the wild pulsation that
I felt before the strife,
When I heard my days before me, and
the tumult of my life; 110

Yearning for the large excitement that
the coming years would yield,
Eager-hearted as a boy when first he
leaves his father's field,

And at night along the dusky high-
way near and nearer drawn,
Sees in heaven the light of London
flaring like a dreary dawn;

And his spirit leaps within him to be
gone before him then,
Underneath the light he looks at, in
among the throngs of men;

Men, my brothers, men the workers,
ever reaping something new;
That which they have done but earnest
of the things that they shall do.

For I dipt into the future, far as
human eye could see.
Saw the Vision of the world, and all
the wonder that would be; 120

Saw the heavens fill with commerce,
argosies of magic sails,
Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping
down with costly bales;

Heard the heavens fill with shout-
ing, and there rain'd a ghastly
dew

From the nations' airy navies grap-
pling in the central blue;

Far along the world-wide whisper of
the south-wind rushing warm,
With the standards of the peoples
plunging thro' the thunder-
storm;

Till the war-drum throbb'd no longer,
and the battle-flags were fur'd
In the Parliament of man, the Feder-
ation of the world.

There the common sense of most
shall hold a fretful realm in
awe,

And the kindly earth shall slumber,
lapt in universal law. 130

So I triumph'd ere my passion sweep-
ing thro' me left me dry,
Left me with the palsied heart, and
left me with the jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all
things here are out of joint.
Science moves, but slowly, slowly,
creeping on from point to point;

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a
lion, creeping nigher,
Glares at one that nods and winks
behind a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not thro' the ages one
increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd
with the process of the suns.

What is that to him that reaps not
harvest of his youthful joys,
Tho' the deep heart of existence beat
for ever like a boy's? 140

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lin-
gers, and I linger on the shore,
And the individual withers, and the
world is more and more

Knowledge comes, but wisdom lingers,
and he bears a laden breast,
Full of sad experience, moving to
ward the stillness of his rest.

Hark, my merry comrades call me,
sounding on the bugle-horn,
They to whom my foolish passion
were a target for their scorn.

Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on
such a moulder'd string?
I am shamed thro' all my nature to
have loved so slight a thing.

Weakness to be wroth with weak-
ness! woman's pleasure, wo-
man's pain— 149
Nature made them blinder motions
bounded in a shallower brain.

Woman is the lesser man, and all thy
passions, match'd with mine,
Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and
as water unto wine —

Here at least, where nature sickens,
nothing. Ah, for some retreat
Deep in yonder shining Orient, where
my life began to beat,

Where in wild Mahratta-battle fell
my father evil-starr'd; —
I was left a trampled orphan, and a
selfish uncle's ward.

Or to burst all links of habit — there
to wander far away,
On from island unto island at the
gateways of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow
moons and happy skies,
Breadths of tropic shade and palms in
cluster, knots of Paradise. 160

Never comes the trader, never floats
an European flag,
Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland,
swings the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy blossom'd bower,
hangs the heavy-fruited tree —
Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-
purple spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment
more than in this march of mind,
In the steamship, in the railway, in the
thoughts that shake mankind.



'Baby lips will laugh me down; my latest rival brings thee rest.
Baby fingers, waxen touches, press me from the mother's breast.'

There the passions cramp'd no longer
shall have scope and breathing
space ;

I will take some savage woman, she
shall rear my dusky race.

Iron-jointed, supple-sinew'd, they shall
dive, and they shall run,
Catch the wild goat by the hair, and
hurl their lances in the sun ; 170

Whistle back the parrot's call, and leap
the rainbows of the brooks,
Not with blinded eyesight poring over
miserable books—

Fool, again the dream, the fancy ! but
I know my words are wild,
But I count the gray barbarian lower
than the Christian child.

I, to herd with narrow foreheads,
vacant of our glorious gains,
Like a beast with lower pleasures, like
a beast with lower pains !

Mated with a squalid savage—what
to me were sun or clime ?
I the heir of all the ages, in the fore-
most files of time—

I that rather held it better men should
perish one by one, 179
Than that earth should stand at gaze
like Joshua's moon in Ajalon !

Not in vain the distance beacons.
Forward, forward let us range,
Let the great world spin for ever down
the ringing grooves of change.

Thro' the shadow of the globe we
sweep into the younger day ;
Better fifty years of Europe than a
cycle of Cathay.

Mother-Age, — for mine I knew not, —
help me as when life begun ;
Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash
the lightnings, weigh the sun.

O, I see the crescent promise of my
spirit hath not set.
Ancient founts of inspiration well
thro' all my fancy yet.

Howsoever these things be, a long
farewell to Locksley Hall !
Now for me the woods may wither,
now for me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapor from the margin, black-
ening over heath and holt, 191
Cramming all the blast before it, in
its breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain
or hail, or fire or snow ;
For the mighty wind arises, roaring
seaward, and I go.

GODIVA

*I WAITED for the train at Coventry ;
I hung with grooms and porters on the
bridge,
To watch the three tall spires ; and there
I shaped*

The city's ancient legend into this : —
Not only we, the latest seed of Time,
New men, that in the flying of a wheel
Cry down the past, not only we, that
prate

Of rights and wrongs, have loved the
people well,
And loathed to see them overtax'd ;
but she

Did more, and underwent, and over-
came, 180
The woman of a thousand summers
back,

Godiva, wife to that grim Earl, who
ruled

In Coventry ; for when he laid a tax
Upon his town, and all the mothers
brought

Their children, clamoring, 'If we pay,
we starve !'

She sought her lord, and found him,
where he strode

About the hall, among his dogs, alone,
His beard a foot before him, and his hair
A yard behind. She told him of their
tears,

And pray'd him, 'If they pay this tax,
they starve.' 180

Whereat he stared, replying, half-
amazed,

'You would not let your little finger
ache

For such as *these?*' — 'But I would die,' said she.
 He laugh'd, and swore by Peter and by Paul,
 Then fillip'd at the diamond in her ear:
 'O, ay, ay, ay, you talk!' — 'Alas!' she said,
 'But prove me what it is I would not do.'

As winds from all the compass shift and blow,
 Made war upon each other for an hour,
 Till pity won. She sent a herald forth,
 And bade him cry, with sound of trumpet, all
 The hard condition, but that she would loose



'Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there
 Unclassp'd the wedded eagles of her belt'

And from a heart as rough as Esau's hand,
 He answer'd, 'Ride you naked thro' the town,
 And I repeat it;' and nodding, as in scorn,
 He parted, with great strides among his dogs.
 So left alone, the passions of her mind,

The people; therefore, as they loved her well,
 From then till noon no foot should pace the street,
 No eye look down, she passing, but that all
 Should keep within, door shut, and window barr'd.
 Then fled she to her inmost bower, and there

Unclasp'd the wedded eagles of her
 belt,
 The grim Earl's gift; but ever at a
 breath
 She linger'd, looking like a summer
 moon
 Half-dipt in cloud. Anon she shook
 her head,
 And shower'd the rippled ringlets to
 her knee;
 Unclad herself in haste; adown the
 stair
 Stole on; and like a creeping sunbeam
 slid
 From pillar unto pillar, until she
 reach'd
 The gateway; there she found her
 palfrey trapt
 In purple blazon'd with armorial
 gold.

Then she rode forth, clothed on with
 chastity.
 The deep air listen'd round her as she
 rode,
 And all the low wind hardly breathed
 for fear.
 The little wide-mouth'd heads upon
 the spout
 Had cunning eyes to see; the barking
 cur
 Made her cheek flame; her palfrey's
 footfall shot
 Light horrors thro' her pulsés; the
 blind walls
 Were full of chinks and holes; and
 overhead
 Fantastic gables, crowding, stared;
 but she
 Not less thro' all bore up, till, last, she
 saw
 The white-flower'd elder-thicket from
 the field
 Gleam thro' the Gothic archway in the
 wall.

Then she rode back, clothed on with
 chastity.
 And one low churl, compact of thank-
 less earth,
 • The fatal byword of all years to come,
 Boring a little auger-hole in fear,
 Peep'd — but his eyes, before they had
 their will,
 Were shrivell'd into darkness in his
 head,
 And dropt before him. So the Powers,
 who wait

On noble deeds, cancell'd a sense mis-
 used;
 And she, that knew not, pass'd; and
 all at once,
 With twelve great shocks of sound,
 the shameless noon
 Was clash'd and hammer'd from a
 hundred towers,
 One after one; but even then she
 gain'd
 Her bower, whence reissuing, robed
 and crown'd,
 To meet her lord, she took the tax
 away
 And built herself an everlasting name.

THE DAY-DREAM

PROLOGUE

O LADY FLORA, let me speak;
 A pleasant hour has passed away
 While, dreaming on your damask
 cheek,
 The dewy sister-eyelids lay.
 As by the lattice you reclined,
 I went thro' many wayward moods
 To see you dreaming — and, behind,
 A summer crisp with shining woods.
 And I too dream'd, until at last
 Across my fancy, brooding warm, 10
 The reflex of a legend past,
 And loosely settled into form.
 And would you have the thought I had,
 And see the vision that I saw,
 Then take the broderie-frame, and add
 A crimson to the quaint macaw,
 And I will tell it. Turn your face,
 Nor look with that too-earnest eye —
 The rhymes are dazzled from their
 place
 And order'd words asunder fly. 20

THE SLEEPING PALACE

I

THE varying year with blade and sheaf
 Clothes and reclothes the happy
 plains,
 Here rests the sap within the leaf,
 Here stays the blood along the veins.
 Faint shadows, vapors lightly curl'd,
 Faint murmurs from the meadows
 come,
 Like hints and echoes of the world
 To spirits folded in the womb.



'The page has caught her hand in his ;
Her lips are sever'd as to speak'

II

Soft lustre bathes the range of urns
On every slanting terrace-lawn. 30
The fountain to his place returns
Deep in the garden lake with-
drawn.
Here droops the banner on the tower,
On the hall-hearths the festal fires,
The peacock in his laurel bower,
The parrot in his gilded wires.

III

Roof-haunting martins warm their
eggs ;
In these, in those the life is stay'd.
The mantles from the golden pegs
Droop sleepily ; no sound is made, 40
Not even of a gnat that sings.
More like a picture seemeth all
Than those old portraits of old kings,
That watch the sleepers from the
wall.

IV

Here sits the butler with a flask
Between his knees, half-drain'd ; and
there
The wrinkled steward at his task,
The maid-of-honor blooming fair.
The page has caught her hand in his ;
Her lips are sever'd as to speak ; 50
His own are pouted to a kiss ;
The blush is fix'd upon her cheek.

V

Till all the hundred summers pass,
The beams that thro' the oriel
shine
Make prisms in every carven glass
And beaker brimm'd with noble
wine.
Each baron at the banquet sleeps,
Grave faces gather'd in a ring.
His state the king reposing keeps.
He must have been a jovial king. 60

VI

All round a hedge upshoots, and
shows
At distance like a little wood;
Thorns, ivies, woodbine, mistletoes,
And grapes with bunches red as
blood;
All creeping plants, a wall of green
Close-matted, bur and brake and
brier,
And glimpsing over these, just seen,
High up, the topmost palace spire.

VII

When will the hundred summers
die,
And thought and time be born
again,
And newer knowledge, drawing nigh,
Bring truth that sways the soul of
men?
Here all things in their place remain,
As all were order'd, ages since.
Come, Care and Pleasure, Hope and
Pain,
And bring the fated fairy Prince.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

I

YEAR after year unto her feet,
She lying on her couch alone,
Across the purple coverlet
The maiden's jet-black hair has
grown,
On either side her tranced form
Forth streaming from a braid of
pearl;
The slumbrous light is rich and
warm,
And moves not on the rounded
curl.

II

The silk star-broider'd coverlid
Unto her limbs itself doth mould
Languidly ever; and, amid
Her full black ringlets downward
roll'd,
Gloweth forth each softly-shadow'd
arm
With bracelets of the diamond
bright.
Her constant beauty doth inform
Stillness with love, and day with
light.

III

She sleeps; her breathings are not
heard
In palace chambers far apart.
The fragrant tresses are not stirr'd
That lie upon her charmed heart.
She sleeps; on either hand upswells
The gold-fringed pillow lightly
prest;
She sleeps, nor dreams, but ever
dwells
A perfect form in perfect rest.

THE ARRIVAL

I

ALL precious things, discover'd late,
To those that seek them issue forth;
For love in sequel works with fate,
And draws the veil from hidden
worth.
He travels far from other skies —
His mantle glitters on the rocks —
A fairy Prince, with joyful eyes,
And lighter-footed than the fox.

II

The bodies and the bones of those
That strove in other days to pass
Are wither'd in the thorny close,
Or scatter'd blanching on the grass.
He gazes on the silent dead:
'They perish'd in their daring
deeds.'
This proverb flashes thro' his head,
'The many fail, the one succeeds.'

III

He comes, scarce knowing what he
seeks;
He breaks the hedge; he enters
there;
The color flies into his cheeks;
He trusts to light on something
fair;
For all his life the charm did talk
About his path, and hover near
With words of promise in his walk,
And whisper'd voices at his ear.

IV

More close and close his footsteps
wind;
The Magic Music in his heart
Beats quick and quicker, till he find
The quiet chamber far apart.

His spirit flutters like a lark,
 He stoops — to kiss her — on his
 knee. 130
 'Love, if thy tresses be so dark,
 How dark those hidden eyes must
 be!'

THE REVIVAL

I

A TOUCH, a kiss! the charm was
 snapt.
 There rose a noise of striking
 clocks,
 And feet that ran, and doors that
 clapt,
 And barking dogs, and crowing
 cocks;
 A fuller light illumined all,
 A breeze thro' all the garden
 swept,
 A sudden hubbub shook the hall,
 And sixty feet the fountain leapt. 140

II

The hedge broke in, the banner blew,
 The butler drank, the steward
 scrawl'd,
 The fire shot up, the martin flew,
 The parrot scream'd, the peacock
 squall'd,
 The maid and page renew'd their
 strife,
 The palace bang'd and buzz'd and
 clackt,
 And all the long-pent stream of life
 Dash'd downward in a cataract.

III

And last with these the king awoke,
 And in his chair himself uprear'd, 150
 And yawn'd, and rubb'd his face, and
 spoke,
 'By holy rood, a royal beard!
 How say you? we have slept, my
 lords.
 My beard has grown into my lap.'



“How say you? we have slept, my lords.
 My beard has grown into my lap.”

The barons swore, with many words,
'T was but an after-dinner's nap.

IV

'Pardy,' return'd the king, 'but still
My joints are somewhat stiff or so.
My lord, and shall we pass the bill
I mention'd half an hour ago?' 160
The chancellor, sedate and vain,
In courteous words return'd reply,
But dallied with his golden chain,
And, smiling, put the question by.

THE DEPARTURE

I

AND on her lover's arm she leant,
And round her waist she felt it fold,
And far across the hills they went
In that new world which is the
old;
Across the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim, 170
And deep into the dying day
The happy princess follow'd him.

II

'I'd sleep another hundred years,
O love, for such another kiss;'
'O, wake for ever, love,' she hears;
'O love, 't was such as this and
this.'
And o'er them many a sliding star
And many a merry wind was
borne,
And, stream'd thro' many a golden
bar,
The twilight melted into morn. 180

III

'O eyes long laid in happy sleep!'
'O happy sleep, that lightly fled!'
'O happy kiss, that woke thy sleep!'
'O love, thy kiss would wake the
dead!'
And o'er them many a flowing range
Of vapor buoy'd the crescent-bark,
And, rapt thro' many a rosy change,
The twilight died into the dark.

IV

'A hundred summers! can it be?
And whither goest thou, tell me
where?' 190
O, seek my father's court with me,
For there are greater wonders there.'

And o'er the hills, and far away
Beyond their utmost purple rim,
Beyond the night, across the day,
'Thro' all the world she follow'd him.

MORAL

I

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
And if you find no moral there,
Go, look in any glass and say,
What moral is in being fair. 200
O, to what uses shall we put
The wildweed-flower that simply
blows?
And is there any moral shut
Within the bosom of the rose?

II

But any man that walks the mead,
In bud or blade or bloom, may
find,
According as his humors lead,
A meaning suited to his mind.
And liberal applications lie
In Art like Nature, dearest friend;
So 't were to cramp its use if I 211
Should hook it to some useful end.

L'ENVOI

I

You shake your head. A random
string
Your finer female sense offends.
Well — were it not a pleasant thing
To fall asleep with all one's friends;
To pass with all our social ties
To silence from the paths of men,
And every hundred years to rise
And learn the world, and sleep
again; 220
To sleep thro' terms of mighty wars,
And wake on science grown to
more,
On secrets of the brain, the stars,
As wild as aught of fairy lore;
And all that else the years will
show,
The Poet-forms of stronger hours,
The vast Republics that may grow,
The Federations and the Powers;
Titanic forces taking birth
In divers seasons, divers climes? 230
For we are Ancients of the earth,
And in the morning of the times.

II

So sleeping, so aroused from sleep
Thro' sunny decads new and strange,
Or gay quinqueniads, would we
reap
The flower and quintessence of
change.

III

Ah, yet would I—and would I might!
So much your eyes my fancy take—
Be still the first to leap to light
That I might kiss those eyes awake!
For, am I right, or am I wrong, ²⁴¹
To choose your own you did not
care;
You'd have my moral from the song,
And I will take my pleasure there;
And, am I right or am I wrong,
My fancy, ranging thro' and thro',
To search a meaning for the song,
Perforce will still revert to you,
Nor finds a closer truth than this
All-graceful head, so richly curl'd,
And evermore a costly kiss ²⁵¹
The prelude to some brighter world.

IV

For since the time when Adam first
Embraced his Eve in happy hour,
And every bird of Eden burst
In carol, every bud to flower,
What eyes, like thine, have waken'd
hopes,
What lips, like thine, so sweetly
join'd?
Where on the double rosebud droops
The fulness of the pensive mind; ²⁶⁰
Which, all too dearly self-involved,
Yet sleeps a dreamless sleep to me,—
A sleep by kisses undissolved,
That lets thee neither hear nor see:
But break it. In the name of wife,
And in the rights that name may
give,
Are clasp'd the moral of thy life,
And that for which I care to live.

EPILOGUE

So, Lady Flora, take my lay,
And if you find a meaning there, ²⁷⁰
O, whisper to your glass, and say,
'What wonder if he thinks me fair?'
What wonder I was all unwise,
To shape the song for your delight

Like long-tail'd birds of Paradise
That float thro' heaven, and cannot
light?
Or old-world trains, upheld at court
By Cupid-boys of blooming hue—
But take it—earnest wed with sport,
And either sacred unto you. ²⁸⁰

AMPHION

My father left a park to me,
But it is wild and barren,
A garden too with scarce a tree,
And waster than a warren;
Yet say the neighbors when they call
It is not bad but good land,
And in it is the germ of all
That grows within the woodland.

O, had I lived when song was great
In days of old Amphion, ¹⁰
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
Nor cared for seed or scion!
And had I lived when song was great,
And legs of trees were limber,
And ta'en my fiddle to the gate,
And fiddled in the timber!

'Tis said he had a tuneful tongue,
Such happy intonation,
Wherever he sat down and sung
He left a small plantation; ²⁰
Wherever in a lonely grove
He set up his forlorn pipes,
The gouty oak began to move,
And flounder into hornpipes.

The mountain stirr'd its bushy crown,
And, as tradition teaches,
Young ashes pirouetted down
Coquetting with young beeches;
And briony-vine and ivy-wreath
Ran forward to his rhyming, ³⁰
And from the valleys underneath
Came little copses climbing.

The linden broke her ranks and rent
The woodbine wreaths that bind
her,
And down the middle, buzz! she went
With all her bees behind her;
The poplars, in long order due,
With cypress promenaded,
The shock-head willows two and two
By rivers galloped. ⁴⁰

Came wet-shod alder from the wave,
 Came yews, a dismal coterie;
 Each pluck'd his one foot from the
 grave,

Poussetting with a sloe-tree;
 Old elms came breaking from the
 vine,

The vine stream'd out to follow,
 And, sweating rosin, plump'd the pine
 From many a cloudy hollow.

And was n't it a sight to see,
 When, ere his song was ended, ⁵⁰
 Like some great landslip, tree by tree,

The country-side descended;
 And shepherds from the mountain-
 eaves

Look'd down, half-pleased, half-
 frighten'd,

As dash'd about the drunken leaves
 The random sunshine lighten'd?

O, Nature first was fresh to men,
 And wanton without measure;
 So youthful and so flexile then,
 You moved her at your pleasure. ⁶⁰
 Twang out, my fiddle! shake the
 twigs!

And make her dance attendance;
 Blow, flute, and stir the stiff-set sprigs,
 And scirrhous roots and tendons!

'Tis vain! in such a brassy age
 I could not move a thistle;
 The very sparrows in the hedge
 Scarce answer to my whistle;
 Or at the most, when three-parts-sick
 With strumming and with scraping,
 A jackass heehaws from the rick, ⁷¹
 The passive oxen gaping.

But what is that I hear? a sound
 Like sleepy counsel pleading;
 O Lord!—'tis in my neighbor's
 ground,

The modern Muses reading.
 They read Botanic Treatises,
 And Works on Gardening thro'
 there,
 And Methods of Transplanting Trees
 To look as if they grew there. ⁸⁰

The wither'd Misses! how they prose
 O'er books of travell'd seamen,
 And show you slips of all that grows
 From England to Van Diemen.

They read in arbors clipt and cut,
 And alleys, faded places,
 By squares of tropic summer shut
 And warm'd in crystal cases.

But these, tho' fed with careful dirt,
 Are neither green nor sappy; ⁹⁴
 Half-conscious of the garden-squirt,
 The spindlings look unhappy.
 Better to me the meanest weed
 That blows upon its mountain,
 The vilest herb that runs to seed
 Beside its native fountain.

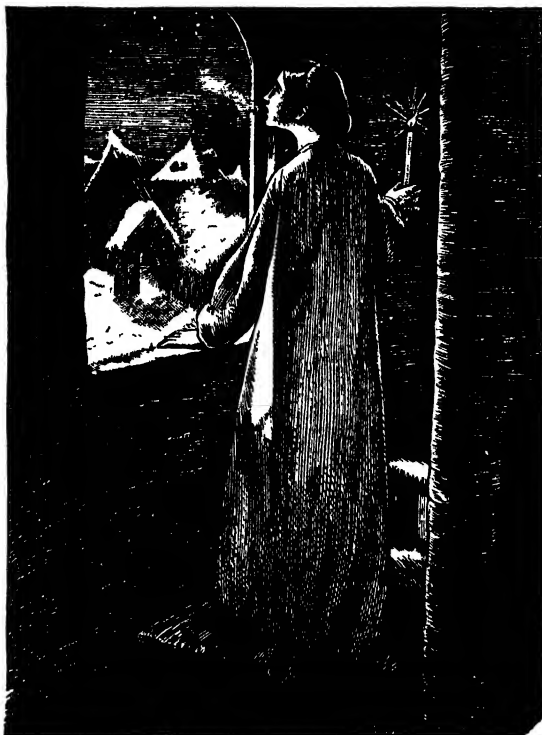
And I must work thro' months of toil,
 And years of cultivation,
 Upon my proper patch of soil
 To grow my own plantation. ¹⁰⁰
 I'll take the showers as they fall,
 I will not vex my bosom;
 Enough if at the end of all
 A little garden blossom.

SAINT AGNES' EVE

DEEP on the convent-roof the snows
 Are sparkling to the moon;
 My breath to heaven like vapor goes;
 May my soul follow soon!
 The shadows of the convent-towers
 Slant down the snowy sward,
 Still creeping with the creeping hours
 That lead me to my Lord.
 Make Thou my spirit pure and clear
 As are the frosty skies,
 Or this first snowdrop of the year
 That in my bosom lies.

As these white robes are soil'd and
 dark,
 To yonder shining ground;
 As this pale taper's earthly spark,
 To yonder argent round;
 So shows my soul before the Lamb,
 My spirit before Thee;
 So in mine earthly house I am,
 To that I hope to be.
 Break up the heavens, O Lord! and far,
 Thro' all yon starlight keen,
 Draw me, thy bride, a glittering
 star,
 In raiment white and clean.

He lifts me to the golden doors;
 The flashes come and go;



'My breath to heaven like vapor goes ;
May my soul follow soon'

All heaven bursts her starry floors,
And strows her lights below,
And deepens on and up ! the gates
Roll back, and far within
For me the Heavenly Bridegroom
waits,
To make me pure of sin.
The Sabbaths of Eternity,
One Sabbath deep and wide—
A light upon the shining sea—
The Bridegroom with his bride !

EDWARD GRAY

SWEET Emma Moreland of yonder
town
Met me walking on yonder way ;

'And have you lost your heart ?' she
said ;
'And are you married yet, Edward
Gray ?'

Sweet Emma Moreland spoke to me .
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away :
'Sweet Emma Moreland, love no more
Can touch the heart of Edward
Gray.

'Ellen Adair she loved me well,
Against her father's and mother's
will ;
To-day I sat for an hour and wept
By Ellen's grave, on the windy
hill.

'Shy she was, and I thought her
cold,
Thought her proud, and fled over
the sea;
Fill'd I was with folly and spite,
When Ellen Adair was dying for me.

'Cruel, cruel the words I said!
Cruelly came they back to-day:
'You're too slight and fickle,' I said,
'To trouble the heart of Edward
Gray.'

'There I put my face in the grass—
Whisper'd, "Listen to my despair;
I repent me of all I did;
Speak a little, Ellen Adair!"

'Then I took a pencil, and wrote
On the mossy stone, as I lay,
'Here lies the body of Ellen Adair;
And here the heart of Edward
Gray!"

'Love may come, and love may go,
And fly, like a bird, from tree to
tree;
But I will love no more, no more,
Till Ellen Adair come back to me.

'Bitterly wept I over the stone;
Bitterly weeping I turn'd away.
There lies the body of Ellen Adair!
And there the heart of Edward
Gray!"

SIR GALAHAD

My good blade carves the casques of
men,
My tough lance thrusteth sure,
My strength is as the strength of ten,
Because my heart is pure,
The shattering trumpet shrilleth high,
The hard brands shiver on the steel,
The splinter'd spear-shafts crack and
fly,
The horse and rider reel;
They reel, they roll in clanging lists,
And when the tide of combat stands,
Perfume and flowers fall in showers,
That lightly rain from ladies' hands.

How sweet are looks that ladies bend
On whom their favors fall!

For them I battle till the end,
To save from shame and thrall;
But all my heart is drawn above,
My knees are bow'd in crypt and
shrine;
I never felt the kiss of love,
Nor maiden's hand in mine.
More bounteous aspects on me beam,
Me mightier transports move and
thrill;
So keep I fair thro' faith and prayer
A virgin heart in work and will.

When down the stormy crescent
goes,
A light before me swims,
Between dark stems the forest glows,
I hear a noise of hymns.
Then by some secret shrine I ride;
I hear a voice, but none are there;
The stalls are void, the doors are
wide,
The tapers burning fair.
Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
The silver vessels sparkle clean,
The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
And solemn chaunts resound be-
tween.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-mores
I find a magic bark.
I leap on board; no helmsman steers;
I float till all is dark.
A gentle sound, an awful light!
Three angels bear the Holy Grail;
With folded feet, in stoles of white,
On sleeping wings they sail.
Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
My spirit beats her mortal bars,
As down dark tides the glory slides,
And starlike mingles with the stars.

When on my goodly charger borne
Thro' dreaming towns I go,
The cock crows ere the Christmas
morn,
The streets are dumb with snow.
The tempest crackles on the leads,
And, ringing, springs from brand
and mail;
But o'er the dark a glory spreads,
And gilds the driving hail.
I leave the plain, I climb the height;
No branchy thicket shelter yields;
But blessed forms in whistling storms
Fly o'er waste fens and windy fields.

A maiden knight—to me is given 61
 Such hope, I know not fear;
 I yearn to breathe the airs of heaven
 That often meet me here.
 I muse on joy that will not cease,
 Pure spaces clothed in living beams,
 Pure lilies of eternal peace,
 Whose odors haunt my dreams;
 And, stricken by an angel's hand,
 This mortal armor that I wear, 70
 This weight and size, this heart and
 eyes,
 Are touch'd, are turn'd to finest
 air.

The clouds are broken in the sky,
 And thro' the mountain-walls
 A rolling organ-harmony
 Swells up and shakes and falls.

Then move the trees, the copses nod,
 Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
 'O just and faithful knight of God!
 Ride on! the prize is near.' 80
 So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
 By bridge and ford, by park and
 pale,
 All-arm'd I ride, whate'er betide,
 Until I find the Holy Grail.

WILL WATERPROOF'S LYRICAL MONOLOGUE

MADE AT THE COCK

O PLUMP head-waiter at The Cock,
 To which I most resort,
 How goes the time? 'Tis five o'clock
 Go fetch a pint of port;



'Then by some secret shrine I ride;
 I hear a voice, but none are there'

But let it not be such as that
 You set before chance-comers,
 But such whose father-grape grew fat
 On Lusitanian summers.

No vain libation to the Muse,
 But may she still be kind, 10
 And whisper lovely words, and use
 Her influence on the mind,
 To make me write my random rhymes,
 Ere they be half-forgotten;
 Nor add and alter, many times,
 Till all be ripe and rotten.

I pledge her, and she comes and dips
 Her laurel in the wine,
 And lays it thrice upon my lips,
 These favor'd lips of mine; 20
 Until the charm have power to make
 New life-blood warm the bosom,
 And barren commonplaces break
 In full and kindly blossom.

I pledge her silent at the board;
 Her gradual fingers steal
 And touch upon the master-chord
 Of all I felt and feel.
 Old wishes, ghosts of broken plans,
 And phantom hopes assemble; 30
 And that child's heart within the man's
 Begins to move and tremble.

Thro' many an hour of summer suns,
 By many pleasant ways,
 Against its fountain upward runs
 The current of my days.
 I kiss the lips I once have kiss'd;
 The gaslight wavers dimmer;
 And softly, thro' a vinous mist,
 My college friendships glimmer. 40

I grow in worth and wit and sense,
 Unboding critic-pen,
 Or that eternal want of pence
 Which vexes public men,
 Who hold their hands to all, and cry
 For that which all deny them —
 Who sweep the crossings, wet or
 dry,
 And all the world go by them.

Ah! yet, tho' all the world forsake,
 Tho' fortune clip my wings, 50
 I will not cramp my heart, nor take
 Half-views of men and things.

Let Whig and Tory stir their blood;
 There must be stormy weather;
 But for some true result of good
 All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes;
 If old things, there are new;
 Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,
 Yet glimpses of the true. 60
 Let riffs be rife in prose and rhyme,
 We lack not rhymes and reasons,
 As on this whirligig of Time
 We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid,
 With fair horizons bound;
 This whole wide earth of light and
 shade
 Comes out a perfect round.
 High over roaring Temple-bar,
 And set in heaven's third story, 70
 I look at all things as they are,
 But thro' a kind of glory.

Head-waiter, honor'd by the guest
 Half-mused, or reeling ripe,
 The pint you brought me was the
 best
 That ever came from pipe.
 But tho' the port surpasses praise,
 My nerves have dealt with stiffer.
 Is there some magic in the place?
 Or do my peptics differ? 80

For since I came to live and learn,
 No pint of white or red
 Had ever half the power to turn
 This wheel within my head,
 Which bears a season'd brain about,
 Unsubject to confusion,
 Tho' soak'd and saturate, out and out,
 Thro' every convolution.

For I am of a numerous house,
 With many kinsmen gay, 90
 Where long and largely we carouse
 As who shall say me nay?
 Each month, a birthday coming on,
 We drink, defying trouble,
 Or sometimes two would meet in one,
 And then we drank it double;

Whether the vintage, yet unkept,
 Had relish fiery-new,



' But whither would my fancy go ?
How out of place she makes
The violet of a legend blow
Among the chops and steaks '

Or elbow-deep in sawdust slept,
As old as Waterloo, ¹⁰⁰
Or, stow'd when classic Canning
died,
In musty bins and chambers,
Had cast upon its crusty side
The gloom of ten Decembers.

The Muse, the jolly Muse, it is !
She answer'd to my call ;
She changes with that mood or this,
Is all-in-all to all ;
She lit the spark within my throat,
To make my blood run quicker, ¹¹⁰
Used all her fiery will, and smote
Her life into the liquor.

And hence this halo lives about
The waiter's hands, that reach
To each his perfect pint of stout,
His proper chop to each.

He looks not like the common breed
That with the napkin dally ;
I think he came, like Ganymede,
From some delightful valley. ¹²⁰

The Cock was of a larger egg
Than modern poultry drop,
Stept forward on a firmer leg,
And cramm'd a plumper crop,
Upon an ampler dunghill trod,
Crow'd lustier late and early,
Sipt wine from silver, praising God,
And raked in golden barley.

A private life was all his joy,
Till in a court he saw ¹³⁰
A something-pottle-bodied boy
That knuckled at the taw.
He stoop'd and clutch'd him, fair and
good,
Flew over roof and casement :

His brothers of the weather stood
Stock-still for sheer amazement.

But he, by farmstead, thorpe, and
spire,
And follow'd with acclaims,
A sign to many a staring shire,
Came crowing over Thames. ¹⁴⁰
Right down by smoky Paul's they
bore,
Till, where the street grows straiter,
One fix'd for ever at the door,
And one became head-waiter.

But whither would my fancy go ?
How out of place she makes
The violet of a legend blow
Among the chops and steaks !
'Tis but a steward of the can,
One shade more plump than com-
mon ; ¹⁵⁰
As just and mere a serving-man
As any born of woman.

I ranged too high : what draws me
down
Into the common day ?
Is it the weight of that half-crown
Which I shall have to pay ?
For, something duller than at first,
Nor wholly comfortable,
I sit, my empty glass reversed,
And thrumming on the table ; ¹⁶⁰

Half fearful that, with self at strife,
I take myself to task,
Lest of the fulness of my life
I leave an empty flask ;
For I had hope, by something rare,
To prove myself a poet,
But, while I plan and plan, my hair
Is gray before I know it.

So fares it since the years began,
Till they be gather'd up ; ¹⁷⁰
The truth, that flies the flowing can,
Will haunt the vacant cup ;
And others' follies teach us not,
Nor much their wisdom teaches ;
And most, of sterling worth, is what
Our own experience preaches.

Ah, let the rusty theme alone !
We know not what we know.

But for my pleasant hour, 't is gone ;
'T is gone, and let it go. ¹⁸⁴
'T is gone : a thousand such have
slipt

Away from my embraces,
And fallen into the dusty crypt
Of darken'd forms and faces.

Go, therefore, thou ! thy betters went
Long since, and came no more ;
With peals of genial clamor sent
From many a tavern-door,
With twisted quirks and happy
hits,
From misty men of letters ; ¹⁹⁰
The tavern-hours of mighty wits, —
Thine elders and thy betters ;

Hours when the Poet's words and
looks
Had yet their native glow,
Nor yet the fear of little books
Had made him talk for show ;
But, all his vast heart sherris-warm'd,
He flash'd his random speeches,
Ere days that deal in ana swarm'd
His literary leeches. ²⁰⁰

So mix for ever with the past,
Like all good things on earth !
For should I prize thee, couldst thou
last,
At half thy real worth ?
I hold it good, good things should
pass ;
With time I will not quarrel ;
It is but yonder empty glass
That makes me maudlin-moral.

Head-waiter of the chop-house here,
To which I most resort, ²¹⁰
I too must part ; I hold thee dear
For this good pint of port.
For this, thou shalt from all things
suck
Marrow of mirth and laughter ;
And wheresoe'er thou move, good
luck
Shall fling her old shoe after.

But thou wilt never move from hence,
The sphere thy fate allots ;
Thy latter days increased with pence
Go down among the pots ; ²²⁰

Thou battenest by the greasy gleam
In haunts of hungry sinners,
Old boxes, larded with the steam
Of thirty thousand dinners.

We fret, we fume, would shift our
skins,
Would quarrel with our lot;
Thy care is, under polish'd tins,
To serve the hot-and-hot;
To come and go, and come again,
Returning like the pewit, 230
And watch'd by silent gentlemen,
That trifle with the cruet.

Live long, ere from thy topmost head
The thick-set hazel dies;
Long, ere the hateful crow shall
tread
The corners of thine eyes;
Live long, nor feel in head or chest
Our changeful equinoxes,
Till mellow Death, like some late
guest,
Shall call thee from the boxes. 240

But when he calls, and thou shalt cease
To pace the gritted floor,
And, laying down an unctuous lease
Of life, shalt earn no more,
No carved cross-bones, the types of
Death,
Shall show thee past to heaven,
But carved cross-pipes, and, under-
neath,
A pint-pot neatly graven.

LADY CLARE

It was the time when lilies blow,
And clouds are highest up in air,
Lord Ronald brought a lily-white
doe
To give his cousin, Lady Clare.

I trow they did not part in scorn;
Lovers long-betroth'd were they;
They two will wed the morrow morn—
God's blessing on the day!

He does not love me for my birth,
Nor for my lands so broad and
fair; 10
He loves me for my own true worth,
And that is well,' said Lady Clare.

In there came old Alice the nurse,
Said, 'Who was this that went from
thee?'

'It was my cousin,' said Lady Clare;
'To-morrow he weds with me.'

'O, God be thank'd,' said Alice the
nurse,
'That all comes round so just and
fair!

Lord Ronald is heir of all your lands,
And you are *not* the Lady Clare.' 20

'Are ye out of your mind, my nurse,
my nurse,'
Said Lady Clare, 'that ye speak so
wild?'

'As God's above,' said Alice the nurse,
'I speak the truth: you are my child.

'The old earl's daughter died at my
breast;
I speak the truth, as I live by bread!
I buried her like my own sweet child,
And put my child in her stead.'

'Falsely, falsely have ye done, 29
O mother,' she said, 'if this be true,
To keep the best man under the sun
So many years from his due.'

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the
nurse,
'But keep the secret for your life,
And all you have will be Lord Ro-
nald's,
When you are man and wife.'

'If I'm a beggar born,' she said,
'I will speak out, for I dare not
lie.
Pull off, pull off, the brooch of gold,
And fling the diamond necklace
by.' 40

'Nay now, my child,' said Alice the
nurse,
'But keep the secret all ye can.'
She said, 'Not so; but I will know
If there be any faith in man.'

'Nay now, what faith?' said Alice
the nurse;
'The man will cleave unto his right,'
'And he shall have it,' the lady replied,
'Tho' I should die to-night.'

'Yet give one kiss to your mother
dear!

Alas, my child, I sinn'd for thee!' ⁴⁹
'O mother, mother, mother,' she said,
'So strange it seems to me.

'Yet here's a kiss for my mother dear,
My mother dear, if this be so,
And lay your hand upon my head,
And bless me, mother, ere I go.'

She clad herself in a russet gown,
She was no longer Lady Clare;
She went by dale, and she went by
down,
With a single rose in her hair. ⁶⁰

The lily-white doe Lord Ronald had
brought
Leapt up from where she lay,
Dropt her head in the maiden's hand,
And follow'd her all the way.

Down stept Lord Ronald from his
tower:
'O Lady Clare, you shame your
worth!
Why come you drest like a village
maid,
That are the flower of the earth?'

'If I come drest like a village maid,
I am but as my fortunes are; ⁷⁰
I am a beggar born,' she said,
'And not the Lady Clare.'

'Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,
'For I am yours in word and in deed.
Play me no tricks,' said Lord Ronald,
'Your riddle is hard to read.'

O, and proudly stood she up!
Her heart within her did not fail;
She look'd into Lord Ronald's eyes,
And told him all her nurse's tale. ⁸⁰

He laugh'd a laugh of merry scorn;
He turn'd and kiss'd her where she
stood;

'If you are not the heiress born,
And I,' said he, 'the next in blood, —

'If you are not the heiress born,
And I,' said he, 'the lawful heir,
We two will wed to-morrow morn,
And you shall still be Lady Clare.'

THE CAPTAIN

A LEGEND OF THE NAVY

HE that only rules by terror
Doeth grievous wrong.
Deep as hell I count his error.
Let him hear my song.
Brave the Captain was; the seamen
Made a gallant crew,
Gallant sons of English freemen,
Sailors bold and true.
But they hated his oppression;
Stern he was and rash, ^c
So for every light transgression
Doom'd them to the lash.
Day by day more harsh and cruel
Seem'd the Captain's mood.
Secret wrath like smother'd fuel
Burnt in each man's blood.
Yet he hoped to purchase glory,
Hoped to make the name
Of his vessel great in story,
Wheresoe'er he came. ²⁰
So they past by capes and islands,
Many a harbor-mouth,
Sailing under palmy highlands
Far within the South.
On a day when they were going
O'er the lone expanse,
In the north, her canvas flowing,
Rose a ship of France.
Then the Captain's color heighten'd,
Joyful came his speech; ^{3c}
But a cloudy gladness lighten'd
In the eyes of each.
'Chase,' he said; the ship flew forward,
And the wind did blow;
Stately, lightly, went she norward,
Till she near'd the foe.
Then they look'd at him they hated,
Had what they desired;
Mute with folded arms they waited —
Not a gun was fired. ⁴⁰
But they heard the foeman's thunder
Roaring out their doom;
All the air was torn in sunder,
Crashing went the boom,
Spars were splinter'd, decks were
shatter'd,
Bullets fell like rain;
Over mast and deck were scatter'd
Blood and brains of men.
Spars were splinter'd; decks were
broken;
Every mother's son — ⁵⁰

Down they dropt—no word was
spoken—

Each beside his gun.
On the decks as they were lying,
Were their faces grim.
In their blood, as they lay dying,
Did they smile on him.
Those in whom he had reliance
For his noble name
With one smile of still defiance
Sold him unto shame. 60
Shame and wrath his heart confounded,
Pale he turn'd and red,
Till himself was deadly wounded
Falling on the dead.
Dismal error! fearful slaughter!
Years have wander'd by;
Side by side beneath the water
Crew and Captain lie;
There the sunlit ocean tosses
O'er them mouldering, 70
And the lonely seabird crosses
With one waft of the wing.

THE LORD OF BURLEIGH

In her ear he whispers gaily,
'If my heart by signs can tell,
Maiden, I have watch'd thee daily,
And I think thou lov'st me well.'
She replies, in accents fainter,
'There is none I love like thee.'
He is but a landscape-painter,
And a village maiden she.
He to lips that fondly falter 10
Presses his without reproof,
Leads her to the village altar,
And they leave her father's roof.
'I can make no marriage present;
Little can I give my wife.
Love will make our cottage pleas-
ant,
And I love thee more than life.'
They by parks and lodges going
See the lordly castles stand;
Summer woods, about them blowing,
Made a murmur in the land. 20



' "Bring the dress and put it on her,
That she wore when she was wed"

From deep thought himself he rouses,
 Says to her that loves him well,
 'Let us see these handsome houses
 Where the wealthy nobles dwell.'
 So she goes by him attended,
 Hears him lovingly converse,
 Sees whatever fair and splendid
 Lay betwixt his home and hers ;
 Parks with oak and chestnut shady,
 Parks and order'd gardens great, 30
 Ancient homes of lord and lady,
 Built for pleasure and for state.
 All he shows her makes him dearer ;
 Evermore she seems to gaze
 On that cottage growing nearer,
 Where they twain will spend their
 days.
 O, but she will love him truly !
 He shall have a cheerful home ,
 She will order all things duly,
 When beneath his roof they come. 40
 Thus her heart rejoices greatly,
 Till a gateway she discerns
 With armorial bearings stately,
 And beneath the gate she turns,
 Sees a mansion more majestic
 Than all those she saw before.
 Many a gallant gay domestic
 Bows before him at the door ;
 And they speak in gentle murmur.
 When they answer to his call, 50
 While he treads with footstep firmer,
 Leading on from hall to hall.
 And, while now she wonders blindly,
 Nor the meaning can divine,
 Proudly turns he round and kindly,
 'All of this is mine and thine.'
 Here he lives in state and bounty,
 Lord of Burleigh, fair and free ;
 Not a lord in all the county
 Is so great a lord as he. 60
 All at once the color flushes
 Her sweet face from brow to
 chin ;
 As it were with shame she blushes,
 And her spirit changed within.
 Then her countenance all over
 Pale again as death did prove ;
 But he clasp'd her like a lover,
 And he cheer'd her soul with
 love.
 So she strove against her weakness,
 Tho' at times her spirit sank, 70
 Shaped her heart with woman's meek-
 ness
 To all duties of her rank ;

And a gentle consort made he,
 And her gentle mind was such
 That she grew a noble lady,
 And the people loved her much.
 But a trouble weigh'd upon her,
 And perplex'd her, night and morn,
 With the burthen of an honor
 Unto which she was not born. 80
 Faint she grew, and ever fainter,
 And she murmur'd, 'O, that he
 Were once more that landscape-painter
 Which did win my heart from
 me !'
 So she droop'd and droop'd before
 him,
 Fading slowly from his side ;
 Three fair children first she bore
 him,
 Then before her time she died.
 Weeping, weeping late and early,
 Walking up and pacing down, 90
 Deeply mourn'd the Lord of Burleigh,
 Burleigh-house by Stamford-town.
 And he came to look upon her,
 And he look'd at her and said,
 'Bring the dress and put it on her,
 That she wore when she was wed.'
 Then her people, softly treading,
 Bore to earth her body, drest
 In the dress that she was wed in,
 That her spirit might have rest. 100

THE VOYAGE

I

We left behind the painted buoy
 That tosses at the harbor-mouth :
 And madly danced our hearts with joy,
 As fast we fled to the south.
 How fresh was every sight and sound
 On open main or winding shore !
 We knew the merry world was round,
 And we might sail for evermore.

II

Warm broke the breeze against the
 brow,
 Dry sang the tackle, sang the sail ; 10
 The Lady's-head upon the prow
 Caught the shrill salt, and sheer'd
 the gale.
 The broad seas swell'd to meet the keel,
 And swept behind ; so quick the run,
 We felt the good ship shake and reel,
 We seem'd to sail into the sun !

III

How oft we saw the sun retire,
 And burn the threshold of the night,
 Fall from his Ocean-lane of fire,
 And sleep beneath his pillar'd light !
 How oft the purple-skirted robe ²¹
 Of twilight slowly downward drawn,
 As thro' the slumber of the globe
 Again we dash'd into the dawn !

IV

New stars all night above the brim
 Of waters lighten'd into view ;
 They climb'd as quickly, for the rim
 Changed every moment as we flew.
 Far ran the naked moon across
 The houseless ocean's heaving field,
 Or flying shone, the silver boss ³¹
 Of her own halo's dusky shield.

V

The peaky islet shifted shapes,
 High towns on hills were dimly
 seen ;
 We past long lines of Northern capes
 And dewy Northern meadows green.
 We came to warmer waves, and deep
 Across the boundless east we drove,
 Where those long swells of breaker
 sweep ³⁹
 The nutmeg rocks and isles of clove.

VI

By peaks that flamed, or, all in shade,
 Gloom'd the low coast and quivering
 brine
 With ashy rains, that spreading made
 Fantastic plume or sable pine ;
 By sands and steaming flats, and floods
 Of mighty mouth, we scudded fast,
 And hills and scarlet-mingled woods
 Glow'd for a moment as we past.

VII

O hundred shores of happy climes,
 How swiftly stream'd ye by the
 bark ! ⁵⁰
 At times the whole sea burn'd, at
 times
 With wakes of fire we tore the dark ;
 At times a carven craft would shoot
 From havens hid in fairy bowers,
 With naked limbs and flowers and
 fruit,
 But we nor paused for fruit nor
 flowers.

VIII

For one fair Vision ever fled
 Down the waste waters day and
 night,
 And still we follow'd where she led,
 In hope to gain upon her flight. ⁶⁰
 Her face was evermore unseen,
 And fixt upon the far sea-line ;
 But each man murmur'd, 'O my
 Queen,
 I follow till I make thee mine.'

IX

And now we lost her, now she gleam'd
 Like Fancy made of golden air,
 Now nearer to the prow she seem'd
 Like Virtue firm, like Knowledge
 fair,
 Now high on waves that idly burst
 Like Heavenly Hope she crown'd the
 sea, ⁷⁰
 And now, the bloodless point reversed,
 She bore the blade of Liberty.

X

And only one among us — him
 We pleased not — he was seldom
 pleased ;
 He saw not far, his eyes were dim,
 But ours he swore were all diseased.
 'A ship of fools,' he shriek'd in spite,
 'A ship of fools,' he sneer'd and wept.
 And overboard one stormy night
 He cast his body, and on we swept.

XI

And never sail of ours was furl'd, ⁸¹
 Nor anchor dropt at eve or morn ;
 We loved the glories of the world,
 But laws of nature were our scorn.
 For blasts would rise and rave and
 cease,
 But whence were those that drove
 the sail
 Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,
 And to and thro' the counter gale ?

XII

Again to colder climes we came,
 For still we follow'd where she led ; ⁹⁰
 Now mate is blind and captain lame,
 And half the crew are sick or dead,
 But, blind or lame or sick or sound,
 We follow that which flies before ;
 We know the merry world is round,
 And we may sail for evermore.

SIR LAUNCELOT AND QUEEN
GUINEVERE

A FRAGMENT

LIKE souls that balance joy and pain,
With tears and smiles from heaven
again

The maiden Spring upon the plain
Came in a sunlit fall of rain.

In crystal vapor everywhere
Blue isles of heaven laugh'd between,
And far, in forest-deeps unseen,
The topmost elm-tree gather'd green
From draughts of balmy air.

Sometimes the linnet piped his song;
Sometimes the throstle whistled
strong;

Sometimes the sparrowhawk, wheel'd
along,
Hush'd all the groves from fear of
wrong;

By grassy capes with fuller sound
In curves the yellowing river ran.
And drooping chestnut-buds began
To spread into the perfect fan,
Above the teeming ground.

Then, in the boyhood of the year,
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere
Rode thro' the coverts of the deer,
With blissful treble ringing clear.

She seem'd a part of joyous
Spring;

A gown of grass-green silk she wore,
Buckled with golden clasps before;
A light-green tuft of plumes she bore
Closed in a golden ring.

Now on some twisted ivy-net,
Now by some tinkling rivulet,
In mosses mixt with violet
Her cream-white mule his pastern
set;

And fleetier now she skimm'd the
plains

Than she whose elfin prancer springs
By night to cery warblings,
When all the glimmering moorland
rings

With jingling bridle-reins.

As she fled fast thro' sun and shade
The happy winds upon her play'd,
Blowing the ringlet from the braid.

She look'd so lovely, as she sway'd
The rein with dainty finger-tips,
A man had given all other bliss,
And all his worldly worth for this,
To waste his whole heart in one kiss
Upon her perfect lips.

A FAREWELL

Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver;
No more by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

Flow, softly flow, by lawn and lea,
A rivulet, then a river;
Nowhere by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

But here will sigh thine alder-tree,
And here thine aspen shiver;
And here by thee will hum the bee,
For ever and for ever.

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

THE EAGLE

FRAGMENT

HE clasps the crag with crooked
hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ring'd with the azure world, he
stands.

The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls;
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

'MOVE EASTWARD, HAPPY
EARTH'

Move eastward, happy earth, and leave
Yon orange sunset waning slow;
From fringes of the faded eve,
O happy planet, eastward go,
Till over thy dark shoulder glow
Thy silver sister-world, and rise
To glass herself in dewy eyes
That watch me from the glen below.



'In robe and crown the king stepped down,
To meet and greet her on her way'

Ah, bear me with thee, smoothly
borne,
Dip forward under starry light,
And move me to my marriage-morn,
And round again to happy night.

THE BEGGAR MAID

HER arms across her breast she laid ;
She was more fair than words can
say ;
Barefooted came the beggar maid
Before the king Cophetua.
In robe and crown the king stepped
down,
To meet and greet her on her way ;
It is no wonder,' said the lords,
'She is more beautiful than day.'

As shines the moon in clouded skies,
She in her poor attire was seen ;
One praised her ankles, one her eyes,
One her dark hair and lovesome
mien.
So sweet a face, such angel grace,
In all that land had never been.
Cophetua sware a royal oath :
'This beggar maid shall be my
queen !'

'COME NOT, WHEN I AM DEAD'

COME not, when I am dead,
To drop thy foolish tears upon my
grave,
To trample round my fallen head,
And vex the unhappy dust thou
wouldst not save.

There let the wind sweep and the
plover cry ;
But thou, go by.

Child, if it were thine error or thy
crime

I care no longer, being all unblest :
Wed whom thou wilt, but I am sick
of time,

And I desire to rest.
Pass on, weak heart, and leave me
where I lie ;

Go by, go by.

THE LETTERS

I

STILL on the tower stood the vane,
A black yew gloom'd the stagnant
air ;

I peer'd athwart the chancel pane
And saw the altar cold and bare.

A clog of lead was round my feet,
A band of pain across my brow ;

'Cold altar, heaven and earth shall
meet

Before you hear my marriage vow.'

II

I turn'd and humm'd a bitter song
That mock'd the wholesome human
heart,

And then we met in wrath and wrong,
We met, but only meant to part.

Full cold my greeting was and dry ;
She faintly smiled, she hardly
moved ;

I saw with half-unconscious eye
She wore the colors I approved.

III

She took the little ivory chest,
With half a sigh she turn'd the key,
Then raised her head with lips com-
prest,

And gave my letters back to me ;
And gave the trinkets and the rings,
My gifts, when gifts of mine could
please.

As looks a father on the things
Of his dead son, I look'd on these.

IV

She told me all her friends had said ;
I raged against the public liar ;

She talk'd as if her love were dead,
But in my words were seeds of
fire.

'No more of love, your sex is known ;
I never will be twice deceived.

Henceforth I trust the man alone,
The woman cannot be believed.

V

'Thro' slander, meanest spawn of
hell, —

And women's slander is the worst, —
And you, whom once I loved so well,

'Thro' you my life will be accurst.'
I spoke with heart and heat and force,

I shook her breast with vague
alarms —

Like torrents from a mountain source
We rush'd into each other's arms.

VI

We parted ; sweetly gleam'd the stars,
And sweet the vapor-braided blue ;

Low breezes fann'd the belfry bars,
As homeward by the church I drew.

The very graves appear'd to smile,
So fresh they rose in shadow'd swells ;

'Dark porch,' I said, 'and silent aisle,
There comes a sound of marriage
bells.'

THE VISION OF SIN

I

I HAD a vision when the night was
late ;

A youth came riding toward a palace-
gate.

He rode a horse with wings, that
would have flown,

But that his heavy rider kept him
down.

And from the palace came a child of
sin,

And took him by the curls, and led
him in,

Where sat a company with heated
eyes,

Expecting when a fountain should
arise.

A sleepy light upon their brows and
lips —

As when the sun, a crescent of eclipse,
Dreams over lake and lawn, and isles
and capes —

Suffused them, sitting, lying, languid
 shapes,
 By heaps of gourds, and skins of wine,
 and piles of grapes.

II

Then methought I heard a mellow
 sound,
 Gathering up from all the lower
 ground;
 Narrowing in to where they sat as-
 sembled,
 Low voluptuous music winding trem-
 bled,
 Woven in circles. They that heard it
 sigh'd,
 Panted hand-in-hand with faces pale,
 Swung themselves, and in low tones
 replied;
 Till the fountain spouted, showering
 wide
 Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail.
 Then the music touch'd the gates and
 died,
 Rose again from where it seem'd to
 fail,
 Storm'd in orbs of song, a growing
 gale;
 Till thronging in and in, to where
 they waited,
 As 't were a hundred-throated night-
 ingale,
 The strong tempestuous treble throb'd
 and palpitated;
 Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound,
 Caught the sparkles, and in circles, 30
 Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid
 mazes,
 Flung the torrent rainbow round.
 Then they started from their places,
 Moved with violence, changed in hue,
 Caught each other with wild grimaces,
 Half-invisible to the view,
 Wheeling with precipitate paces
 To the melody, till they flew,
 Hair and eyes and limbs and faces,
 Twisted hard in fierce embraces, 40
 Like to Furies, like to Graces,
 Dash'd together in blinding dew;
 Till, kill'd with some luxurious agony,
 The nerve-dissolving melody
 Flutter'd headlong from the sky.

III

And then I look'd up toward a moun-
 tain-tract,

That girt the region with high cliff
 and lawn.

I saw that every morning, far with-
 drawn
 Beyond the darkness and the cataract,
 God made Himself an awful rose of
 dawn, 50
 Unheeded; and detaching, fold by
 fold,
 From those still heights, and, slowly
 drawing near,
 A vapor heavy, hueless, formless
 cold,
 Came floating on for many a month
 and year,
 Unheeded; and I thought I would
 have spoken,
 And warn'd that madman ere it grew
 too late,
 But, as in dreams, I could not. Mine
 was broken,
 When that cold vapor touch'd the
 palace-gate,
 And link'd again. I saw within my
 head
 A gray and gap-tooth'd man as lean
 as death, 60
 Who slowly rode across a wither'd
 heath,
 And lighted at a ruin'd inn, and said:

IV

'Wrinkled ostler, grim and thin!
 Here is custom come your way;
 Take my brute, and lead him in,
 Stuff his ribs with mouldy hay.

'Bitter barmaid, waning fast!
 See that sheets are on my bed.
 What! the flower of life is past;
 It is long before you wed. 70

'Slipshod waiter, lank and sour,
 At the Dragon on the heath!
 Let us have a quiet hour,
 Let us hob-and-nob with Death.

'I am old, but let me drink;
 Bring me spices, bring me wine;
 I remember, when I think,
 That my youth was half divine.

'Wine is good for shrivell'd lips,
 When a blanket wraps the day, 80
 When the rotten woodland drips,
 And the leaf is stamp'd in clay.

'Sit thee down, and have no shame,
Cheek by jowl, and knee by knee;
What care I for any name?
What for order or degree?

'Let me screw thee up a peg;
Let me loose thy tongue with wine;
Callest thou that thing a leg?
Which is thinnest? thine or mine?

'Thou shalt not be saved by works, 91
Thou hast been a sinner too;
Ruin'd trunks on wither'd forks,
Empty scarecrows, I and you!

'Fill the cup and fill the can,
Have a rouse before the morn;
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

'We are men of ruin'd blood;
Therefore comes it we are wise. 100
Fish are we that love the mud,
Rising to no fancy-flies.

'Name and fame! to fly sublime
Thro' the courts, the camps, the
schools,
Is to be the ball of Time,
Banded by the hands of fools.

'Friendship!—to be two in one—
Let the canting liar pack!
Well I know, when I am gone,
How she mouths behind my back.

'Virtue!—to be good and just— 111
Every heart, when sifted well,
Is a clot of warmer dust,
Mix'd with cunning sparks of hell.

'O, we two as well can look
Whited thought and cleanly life
As the priest, above his book
Leering at his neighbor's wife.

'Fill the cup and fill the can,
Have a rouse before the morn: 120
Every moment dies a man,
Every moment one is born.

'Drink, and let the parties rave;
They are fill'd with idle spleen,
Rising, falling, like a wave,
For they know not what they mean.

'He that roars for liberty
Faster binds a tyrant's power,
And the tyrant's cruel glee
Forces on the freer hour. 130

'Fill the can and fill the cup;
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again.

'Greet her with applausive breath,
Freedom, gaily doth she tread;
In her right a civic wreath,
In her left a human head.

'No, I love not what is new;
She is of an ancient house, 140
And I think we know the hue
Of that cap upon her brows.

'Let her go! her thirst she slakes
Where the bloody conduit runs,
Then her sweetest meal she makes
On the first-born of her sons.

'Drink to lofty hopes that cool,—
Visions of a perfect State;
Drink we, last, the public fool,
Frantic love and frantic hate. 150

'Chant me now some wicked stave,
Till thy drooping courage rise,
And the glow-worm of the grave
Glimmer in thy rheumy eyes.

'Fear not thou to loose thy tongue,
Set thy hoary fancies free;
What is loathsome to the young
Savors well to thee and me.

'Change, reverting to the years,
When thy nerves could under-
stand 160
What there is in loving tears,
And the warmth of hand in hand.

'Tell me tales of thy first love—
April hopes, the fools of chance—
Till the graves begin to move,
And the dead begin to dance.

'Fill the can and fill the cup;
All the windy ways of men
Are but dust that rises up,
And is lightly laid again. 170

'Trooping from their mouldy dens
The chap-fallen circle spreads —
Welcome, fellow-citizens,
Hollow hearts and empty heads !'

'You are bones, and what of that ?
Every face, however full,
Padded round with flesh and fat,
Is but modell'd on a skull.

'Death is king, and Vivat Rex !
Tread a measure on the stones, 180
Madam — if I know your sex
From the fashion of your bones.

'No, I cannot praise the fire
In your eye — nor yet your lip ;
All the more do I admire
Joints of cunning workmanship.

'Lo ! God's likeness — the ground-
plan —
Neither modell'd, glazed, nor
framed ;

Buss me, thou rough sketch of man,
Far too naked to be shamed ! 190

'Drink to Fortune, drink to Chance,
While we keep a little breath !
Drink to heavy Ignorance !
Hob-and-nob with brother Death !

'Thou art mazed, the night is long,
And the longer night is near —
What ! I am not all as wrong
As a bitter jest is dear.

'Youthful hopes, by scores, to all,
When the locks are crisp and curl'd ;
Unto me my maudlin gall 201
And my mockeries of the world.

'Fill the cup and fill the can ;
Mingle madness, mingle scorn !
Dregs of life, and lees of man ;
Yet we will not die forlorn.'

V

The voice grew faint ; there came a
further change ;
Once more uprose the mystic moun-
tain-range.
Below were men and horses pierced
with worms,
And slowly quickening into lower
forms, 210

By shards and scurf of salt, and scum
of dross,
Old plash of rains, and refuse patch'd
with moss.

Then some one spake : 'Behold ! it
was a crime
Of sense avenged by sense that wore
with time.'

Another said : 'The crime of sense be-
came
The crime of malice, and is equal
blame.'

And one : 'He had not wholly quench'd
his power ;
A little grain of conscience made him
sour.'

At last I heard a voice upon the
slope
Cry to the summit, 'Is there any
hope ?' 220

To which an answer peal'd from that
high land,
But in a tongue no man could under-
stand ;

And on the glimmering linit far with-
drawn
God made Himself an awful rose of
dawn.

TO —

AFTER READING A LIFE AND LETTERS

'Cursed be he that moves my bones.'
Shakespeare's Epitaph.

You might have won the Poet's
name,
If such be worth the winning
now,
And gain'd a laurel for your brow
Of sounder leaf than I can claim ;

But you have made the wiser choice,
A life that moves to gracious
ends

Thro' troops of unrecording friends,
A deedful life, a silent voice.

And you have miss'd the irreverent
doom
Of those that wear the Poet's
crown ;

Hereafter, neither knave nor clown
Shall hold their orgies at your tomb.



'Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!'

For now the Poet cannot die,
Nor leave his music as of old,
But round him ere he scarce be
cold

Begins the scandal and the cry:

'Proclaim the faults he would not
show;
Break lock and seal, betray the
trust;
Keep nothing sacred, 'tis but just
The many-headed beast should know.'

Ah, shameless! for he did but sing
A song that pleased us from its
worth;

No public life was his on earth,
No blazon'd statesman he, nor king.

He gave the people of his best;
His worst he kept, his best he
gave.

My Shakespeare's curse on clown
and knave

Who will not let his ashes rest!

Who make it seem more sweet to
be
The little life of bank and brier,
The bird that pipes his lone de-
sire

And dies unheard within his tree,

Than he that warbles long and loud
And drops at Glory's temple-gates,
For whom the carrion vulture waits
To tear his heart before the crowd!

TO E. L., ON HIS TRAVELS IN
GREECE

ILLYRIAN woodlands, echoing falls
Of water, sheets of summer glass,
The long divine Peneian pass,
The vast Akrokeraunian walls,

Tomohrit, Athos, all things fair,
With such a pencil, such a pen,
You shadow forth to distant men,
I read and felt that I was there.

And trust me while I turn'd the page,
And track'd you still on classic
ground,
I grew in gladness till I found
My spirits in the golden age.

For me the torrent ever pour'd
And glisten'd — here and there alone
The broad-limb'd Gods at random
thrown
By fountain-urns; — and Naiads oar'd

A glimmering shoulder under gloom
Of cavern pillars; on the swell
The silver lily heaved and fell;
And many a slope was rich in bloom,

From him that on the mountain lea
By dancing rivulets fed his flocks
To him who sat upon the rocks
And fluted to the morning sea.

'BREAK, BREAK, BREAK'

BREAK, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could
utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O, well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at
play!

O, well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the
bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanish'd
hand,
And the sound of a voice that is
still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is
dead
Will never come back to me.

THE POET'S SONG

THE rain had fallen, the Poet arose,
He pass'd by the town and out of
the street;
A light wind blew from the gates of
the sun,
And waves of shadow went over the
wheat;
And he sat him down in a lonely place,
And chanted a melody loud and
sweet,
That made the wild-swan pause in her
cloud,
And the lark drop down at his feet.

The swallow stopt as he hunted the
fly,
The snake slipt under a spray,
The wild hawk stood with the down
on his beak,
And stared, with his foot on the
prey;
And the nightingale thought, 'I have
sung many songs,
But never a one so gay,
For he sings of what the world will
be
When the years have died away.'



' The Abbey-ruin in the park '

THE PRINCESS; A MEDLEY

PROLOGUE

SIR WALTER VIVIAN all a summer's
 day
 Gave his broad lawns until the set of
 sun
 Up to the people; thither flock'd at
 noon
 Histenants, wife and child, and thither
 half
 The neighboring borough with their
 Institute,
 Of which he was the patron. I was
 there
 From college, visiting the son, — the
 son

A Walter too, — with others of our set,
 Five others; we were seven at Vivian-
 place.

And me that morning Walter show'd
 the house,
 Greek, set with busts. From vases in ^{to}
 the hall
 Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier
 than their names,
 Grew side by side; and on the pave-
 ment lay
 Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the
 park,
 Huge Ammonites, and the first bones
 of Time;

And on the tables every clime and age
Jumbled together; celts and calumets,
Claymore and snow-shoe, toys in lava,
fans

Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,
Laborious orient ivory sphere in
sphere, ²⁰

The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-
clubs

From the isles of palm; and higher on
the walls,

Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk
and deer,

His own forefathers' arms and armor
hung.

And 'this,' he said, 'was Hugh's at
Agincourt;

And that was old Sir Ralph's at Asca-
lon.

A good knight he! we keep a chronicle
With all about him,'—which he
brought, and I

Dived in a hoard of tales that dealt
with knights

Half-legend, half-historic, counts and
kings ³⁰

Who laid about them at their wills
and died;

And mixt with these a lady, one that
arm'd

Her cwn fair head, and sallying thro'
the gate,

Had beat her foes with slaughter from
her walls.

'O miracle of women,' said the
book,

'O noble heart who, being strait-be-
sieged

By this wild king to force her to his
wish,

Nor bent, nor broke, nor shunn'd a sol-
dier's death,

But now when all was lost or seem'd
as lost—

Her stature more than mortal in the
burst ⁴⁰

Of sunrise, her arm lifted, eyes on
fire—

Brake with a blast of trumpets from
the gate,

And, falling on them like a thunder-
bolt,

She trampled some beneath her horses'
heels,

And some were whelm'd with missiles
of the wall,

And some were push'd with lances
from the rock,

And part were drown'd within the
whirling brook;

O miracle of noble womanhood!

So sang the gallant glorious chroni-
cle;

And, I all rapt in this, 'Come out,' he
said, ⁵⁰

'To the Abbey; there is Aunt Eliza-
beth

And sister Lilia with the rest.' We
went—

I kept the book and had my finger in
it—

Down thro' the park. Strange was the
sight to me;

For all the sloping pasture murmur'd,
sown

With happy faces and with holiday.

There moved the multitude, a thou-
sand heads;

The patient leaders of their Institute
Taught them with facts. One rear'd

a font of stone
And drew, from butts of water on the
slope, ⁶⁰

The fountain of the moment, playing,
now

A twisted snake, and now a rain of
pearls,

Or steep-up spout whereon the gilded
ball

Danced like a wisp; and somewhat
lower down

A man with knobs and wires and vials
fired

A cannon; Echo answer'd in her
sleep

From hollow fields; and here were
telescopes

For azure views; and there a group
of girls

In circle waited, whom the electric
shock

Dislink'd with shrieks and laughter;
round the lake ⁷⁰

A little clock-work steamer paddling
plied

And shook the lilies; perch'd about
the knolls

A dozen angry models jetted steam;
A petty railway ran; a fire-balloon

Rose gem-like up before the dusky
groves
And dropt a fairy parachute and past ;
And there thro' twenty posts of tele-
graph
They flash'd a saucy message to and fro
Between the mimic stations ; so that
sport
Went hand in hand with science ;
otherwhere 80
Pure sport ; a herd of boys with clamor
bowl'd
And stump'd the wicket ; babies roll'd
about
Like tumbled fruit in grass ; and men
and maids
Arranged a country dance, and flew
thro' light
And shadow, while the twangling
violin
Struck up with Soldier-laddie, and
overhead
The broad ambrosial aisles of lofty
lime
Made noise with bees and breeze from
end to end.

Strange was the sight and smacking
of the time ;
And long we gazed, but satiated at
length 90
Came to the ruins. High-arch'd and
ivy-claspt,
Of finest Gothic lighter than a fire,
Thro' one wide chasm of time and
frost they gave
The park, the crowd, the house ; but
all within
The sward was trim as any garden
lawn.
And here we lit on Aunt Elizabeth,
And Lilia with the rest, and lady
friends
From neighbor seats ; and there was
Ralph himself,
A broken statue propt against the
wall,
As gay as any. Lilia, wild with
sport, 100
Half child, half woman as she was,
had wound
A scarf of orange round the stony
helm,
And robed the shoulders in a rosy silk,
That made the old warrior from his
ivied nook

Glow like a sunbeam. Near his tomb
a feast
Shone, silver-set ; about it lay the
guests,
And there we join'd them ; then the
maiden aunt
Took this fair day for text, and from
it preach'd
An universal culture for the crowd,
And all things great. But we, un-
worthier, told 110
Of college : he had climb'd across the
spikes,
And he had squeezed himself betwixt
the bars,
And he had breathed the Proctor's
dogs ; and one
Discuss'd his tutor, rough to com-
mon men,
But honeying at the whisper of a
lord ;
And one the Master, as a rogue in
grain
Veneer'd with sanctimonious theory.

But while they talk'd, above their
heads I saw
The feudal warrior lady-clad ; which
brought
My book to mind, and opening this I
read 120
Of old Sir Ralph a page or two that
rang
With tilt and tourney ; then the tale
of her
That drove her foes with slaughter
from her walls,
And much I praised her nobleness,
and 'Where,'
Ask'd Walter, patting Lilia's head —
she lay
Beside him — 'lives there such a wo-
man now ?'

Quick answer'd Lilia : 'There are
thousands now
Such women, but convention beats
them down ;
It is but bringing up ; no more than
that.
You men have done it — how I hate
you all ! 130
Ah, were I something great ! I wish
I were
Some mighty poetess, I would shame
you then,

That love to keep us children! O, I
wish
That I were some great princess, I
would build
Far off from men a college like a
man's,
And I would teach them all that men
are taught;
We are twice as quick! And here
she shook aside
The hand that play'd the patron with
her curls.

And one said smiling: 'Pretty were
the sight
If our old halls could change their
sex, and flaunt ¹⁴⁰
With prudes for proctors, dowagers
for deans,
And sweet girl-graduates in their
golden hair.
I think they should not wear our rusty
gowns,
But move as rich as Emperor-moths,
or Ralph
Who shines so in the corner; yet I
fear,
If there were many Lillias in the brood,
However deep you might embower
the nest,
Some boy would spy it.'

At this upon the sward
She tapt her tiny silken-sandall'd foot:
'That's your light way; but I would
make it death ¹⁵⁰
For any male thing but to peep at us.'

Petulant she spoke, and at herself
she laugh'd;
A rosebud set with little wilful thorns,
And sweet as English air could make
her, she!
But Walter hail'd a score of names
upon her,
And 'petty Ogress,' and 'ungrateful
Puss,'
And swore he long'd at college, only
long'd,
All else was well, for she-society.
They boated and they cricketed; they
talk'd
At wine, in clubs, of art, of politics;
They lost their weeks; they vex'd the
souls of deans; ¹⁶¹
They rode; they betted; made a hun-
dred friends,

And caught the blossom of the flying
terms,
But miss'd the mignonette of Vivian-
place,
The little hearth-flower Lilia. Thus
he spoke,
Part banter, part affection.
'True,' she said,
'We doubt not that. O, yes, you
miss'd us much!
I'll stake my ruby ring upon it you
d'd.'

She held it out; and as a parrot
turns ¹⁶⁹
Up thro' gilt wires a crafty loving eye,
And takes a lady's finger with all care,
And bites it for true heart and not for
harm,
So he with Lilia's. Daintily she
shriek'd
And wrung it. 'Doubt my word
again!' he said.
'Come, listen! here is proof that you
were miss'd:
We seven stay'd at Christmas up to
read;
And there we took one tuto. as to
read.
The hard-grain'd Muses of the cube
and square
Were out of season; never man, I
think,
So moulder'd in a sinecure as he; ¹⁸⁰
For while our cloisters echo'd frosty
feet,
And our long walks were stript as
bare as brooms,
We did but talk you over, pledge you
all
In wassail; often, like as many girls—
Sick for the hollies and the yews of
home—
As many little trifling Lillias—play'd
Charades and riddles as at Christmas
here,
And *what's my thought* and *when and
where and how*,
And often told a tale from mouth to
mouth
As here at Christmas.'

She remember'd that;
A pleasant game, she thought. She
liked it more ¹⁹¹
Than magic music, forfeits, all the
rest.

But these — what kind of tales did
men tell men,
She wonder'd, by themselves ?

A half-disdain
Perch'd on the pouted blossom of her
lips ;

And Walter nodded at me : 'He began,
The rest would follow, each in turn :
and so

We forged a sevenfold story. Kind ?
what kind ?

Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas sole-
cisms ;

Seven-headed monsters only made to
kill 200

Time by the fire in winter.'

'Kill him now,
The tyrant ! kill him in the summer
too.'

Said Lilia ; 'Why not now ?' the
maiden aunt.

'Why not a summer's as a winter's
tale ?

A tale for summer as befits the time,
And something it should be to suit the
place,

Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,
Grave, solemn !'

Walter warp'd his mouth at this
To something so mock-solemn, that I
laugh'd,

And Lilia woke with sudden-shrilling
mirth 210

An echo like a ghostly woodpecker
Hid in the ruins ; till the maiden
aunt —

A little sense of wrong had touch'd
her face

With color — turn'd to me with 'As
you will ;

Heroic if you will, or what you will,
Or be yourself your hero if you will.'

'Take Lilia, then, for heroine,'
clamor'd he,

'And make her some great princess,
six feet high,

Grand, epic, homicidal ; and be you 219
The prince to win her !'

'Then follow me, the prince,'
I answer'd, 'each be hero in his turn !
Seven and yet one, like shadows in a
dream. —

Heroic seems our princess as required —
But something made to suit with time
and place,

A Gothic ruin and a Grecian house,
A talk of college and of ladies' rights,
A feudal knight in silken masquerade,
And, yonder, shrieks and strange ex-
periments

For which the good Sir Ralph had
burnt them all —

This *were* a medley ! we should have
him back 230

Who told the 'Winter's Tale' to do
it for us.

No matter ; we will say whatever
comes.

And let the ladies sing us, if they will,
From time to time, some ballad or
a song

To give us breathing-space.'

So I began,
And the rest follow'd ; and the women
sang

Between the rougher voices of the men,
Like linnets in the pauses of the wind :
And here I give the story and the
songs.

I

A Prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in
face,

Of temper amorous as the first of May,
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a
girl,

For on my cradle shone the Northern
star.

There lived an ancient legend in our
house.

Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grand-
sire burnt

Because he cast no shadow, had fore-
told,

Dying, that none of all our blood
should know

The shadow from the substance, and
that one

Should come to fight with shadows
and to fall ; 10

For so, my mother said, the story ran.
And, truly, waking dreams were, more
or less,

An old and strange affection of the
house.

Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven
knows what !

On a sudden in the midst of men and
day,

And while I walk'd and talk'd as here-
 tofore,
 I seem'd to move among a world of
 ghosts,
 And feel myself the shadow of a dream.
 Our great court-Galen poised his gilt-
 head cane,
 And paw'd his beard, and mutter'd
 'catalepsy.'²⁰
 My mother pitying made a thousand
 prayers.
 My mother was as mild as any saint,
 Half-canonized by all that look'd on
 her,
 So gracious was her tact and tender-
 ness;
 But my good father thought a king a
 king.
 He cared not for the affection of the
 house;
 He held his sceptre like a pedant's
 wand
 To lash offence, and with long arms
 and hands
 Reach'd out and pick'd offenders from
 the mass
 For judgment.
 Now it chanced that I had been,
 While life was yet in bud and blade,
 betroth'd³¹
 To one, a neighboring Princess. She
 to me
 Was proxy-wedded with a bootless calf
 At eight years old; and still from time
 to time
 Came murmurs of her beauty from the
 South,
 And of her brethren, youths of puis-
 sance;
 And still I wore her picture by my
 heart,
 And one dark tress; and all around
 them both
 Sweet thoughts would swarm as bees
 about their queen.

But when the days drew nigh that I
 should wed,⁴⁰
 My father sent ambassadors with furs
 And jewels, gifts, to fetch her. These
 brought back
 A present, a great labor of the loom;
 And therewithal an answer vague as
 wind.
 Besides, they saw the king; he took
 the gifts;

He said there was a compact; that
 was true;
 But then she had a will; was he to
 blame?
 And maiden fancies; loved to live
 alone
 Among her women; certain, would not
 wed.

That morning in the presence room
 I stood⁵⁰
 With Cyril and with Florian, my two
 friends:
 The first, a gentleman of broken
 means—
 His father's fault—but given to starts
 and bursts
 Of revel; and the last, my other heart,
 And almost my half-self, for still we
 moved
 Together, twinn'd as horse's ear and
 eye.

Now, while they spake, I saw my
 father's face
 Grow long and troubled like a rising
 moon,
 Inflamed with wrath. He started on
 his feet,
 Tore the king's letter, snow'd it down,
 and rent⁶⁰
 The wonder of the loom thro' warp
 and woof
 From skirt to skirt; and at the last he
 sware
 That he would send a hundred thou-
 sand men,
 And bring her in a whirlwind; then he
 chew'd
 The thrice-turn'd cud of wrath, and
 cook'd his spleen,
 Communing with his captains of the
 war.

At last I spoke: 'My father, let me
 go.
 It cannot be but some gross error lies
 In this report, this answer of a king
 Whom all men rate as kind and hos-
 pitable;⁷⁰
 Or, maybe, I myself, my bride once
 seen,
 Whate'er my grief to find her less than
 fame,
 May rue the bargain made.' And
 Florian said:

'I have a sister at the foreign court,
 Who moves about the Princess; she,
 you know,
 Who wedded with a nobleman from
 thence.
 He, dying lately, left her, as I hear,
 The lady of three castles in that
 land;
 Thro' her this matter might be sifted
 clean.'
 And Cyril whisper'd: 'Take me with
 you too.'
 Then laughing, 'What if these weird
 seizures come
 Upon you in those lands, and no one
 near
 To point you out the shadow from the
 truth!
 Take me; I'll serve you better in a
 strait;
 I grate on rusty hinges here.' But
 'No!'
 Roar'd the rough king, 'you shall not;
 we ourself
 Will crush her pretty maiden fancies
 dead
 In iron gauntlets; break the council
 up.'

But when the council broke, I rose
 and past
 Thro' the wild woods that hung about
 the town;
 Found a still place, and pluck'd her
 likeness out;
 Laid it on flowers, and watch'd it
 lying bathed
 In the green gleam of dewy-tassell'd
 trees.
 What were those fancies? wherefore
 break her troth?
 Proud look'd the lips; but while I
 meditated
 A wind arose and rush'd upon the
 South,
 And shook the songs, the whispers, and
 the shrieks
 Of the wild woods together, and a
 Voice
 Went with it, 'Follow, follow, thou
 shalt win.'

Then, ere the silver sickle of that
 month
 Became her golden shield, I stole from
 court

With Cyril and with Florian, unper-
 ceived,
 Cat-footed thro' the town and half in
 dread
 To hear my father's clamor at our
 backs
 With 'Ho!' from some bay-window
 shake the night;
 But all was quiet. From the bastion'd
 walls
 Like threaded spiders, one by one, we
 dropt,
 And flying reach'd the frontier; then
 we crost
 To a livelier land; and so by tilth and
 grange,
 And vines, and blowing bosks of wil-
 derness,
 We gain'd the mother-city thick with
 towers,
 And in the imperial palace found the
 king.

His name was Gama; crack'd and
 small his voice,
 But bland the smile that like a wrin-
 kling wind
 On glassy water drove his cheek in
 lines;
 A little dry old man, without a star,
 Not like a king. Three days he
 feasted us,
 And on the fourth I spake of why we
 came,
 And my betroth'd. 'You do us, Prince,'
 he said,
 Airing a snowy hand and signet
 gem,
 'All honor. We remember love our-
 self
 In our sweet youth. There did a com-
 pact pass
 Long summers back, a kind of cere-
 mony—
 I think the year in which our olives
 fail'd.
 I would you had her, Prince, with all
 my heart,
 With my full heart; but there were
 widows here,
 Two widows, Lady Psyche, Lady
 Blanche;
 They fed her theories, in and out of
 place
 Maintaining that with equal hus-
 bandry



'Set in a gleaming river's crescent-curve'

The woman were an equal to the man.
 They harp'd on this; with this our
 banquets rang; ¹³¹
 Our dances broke and buzz'd in knots
 of talk;
 Nothing but this; my very ears were
 hot
 To hear them. Knowledge, so my
 daughter held,
 Was all in all; they had but been, she
 thought,
 As children; they must lose the child,
 assume
 The woman. Then, sir, awful odes
 she wrote,
 Too awful, sure, for what they treated
 of,
 But all she is and does is awful; odes
 About this losing of the child; and
 rhymes ¹⁴⁰
 And dismal lyrics, prophesying echange
 Beyond all reason. These the women
 sang;

And they that know such things — I
 sought but peace;
 No critic I — would call them master-
 pieces.
 They master'd *me*. At last she begg'd
 a boon,
 A certain summer-palace which I have
 Hard by your father's frontier. I said
 no,
 Yet being an easy man, gave it; and
 there,
 All wild to found an University
 For maidens, on the spur she fled; and
 more ¹⁵⁰
 We know not, — only this: they see no
 men,
 Not even her brother Arac, nor the
 twins
 Her brethren, tho' they love her, look
 upon her
 As on a kind of paragon; and I —
 Pardon me saying it — were much loth
 to breed

Dispute betwixt myself and mine ; but
since —

And I confess with right -- you think
me bound

In some sort, I can give you letters to
her ;

And yet, to speak the truth, I rate
your chance

Almost at naked nothing.'

Thus the king ;
And I, tho' nettled that he seem'd to
slur 161

With garrulous ease and oily courtesies
Our formal compact, yet, not less —
all frets

But chafing me on fire to find my
bride —

Went forth again with both my friends.
We rode

Many a long league back to the North.
At last

From hills that look'd across a land of
hope

We dropt with evening on a rustic
town

Set in a gleaming river's crescent-
curve,

Close at the boundary of the liberties ;
There, enter'd an old hostel, call'd

mine host 171

To council, plied him with his richest
wines,

And show'd the late-writ letters of the
king.

He with a long low sibilation, stared
As blank as death in marble ; then
exclaim'd,

Averting it was clear against all rules
For any man to go ; but as his brain
Began to mellow, 'If the king,' he
said,

'Had given us letters, was he bound
to speak ?

The king would bear him out ;' and at
the last — 180

The summer of the vine in all his
veins —

'No doubt that we might make it
worth his while.

She once had past that way ; he heard
her speak ;

She scared him ; life ! he never saw
the like ;

She look'd as grand as doomsday and
as grave !

And he, he revered his liege-lady
there ;

He always made a point to post with
mares ;

His daughter and his housemaid were
the boys ;

The land, he understood, for miles
about

Was till'd by women ; all the swine
were sows, 196

And all the dogs' —
But while he jested thus,

A thought flash'd thro' me which I
clothed in act,

Remembering how we three presented
Maid,

Or Nymph, or Goddess, at high tide of
feast,

In masque or pageant at my father's
court.

We sent mine host to purchase female
gear ;

He brought it, and himself, a sight to
shake

The midriff of despair with laughter,
holy

To lace us up, till each in maiden
plumes

We rustled ; him we gave a costly
bribe 200

To guerdon silence, mounted our good
steeds,

And boldly ventured on the liberties.

We follow'd up the river as we rode,
And rode till midnight, when the col-
lege lights

Began to glitter firefly-like in copse
And linden alley ; then we past an

arch,
Whereon a woman-statue rose with
wings

From four wing'd horses dark against
the stars,

And some inscription ran along the
front,

But deep in shadow. Further on we
gain'd 210

A little street half garden and half
house,

But scarce could hear each other speak
for noise

Of clocks and chimes, like silver ham-
mers falling

On silver anvils, and the splash and
stir

Of fountains spouted up and shower-
ing down
In meshes of the jasmine and the rose ;
And all about us peal'd the nightin-
gale,
Rapt in her song and careless of the
snare.

There stood a bust of Pallas for a
sign,
By two sphere lamps blazon'd like
Heaven and Earth ²²⁰
With constellation and with continent,
Above an entry. Riding in, we call'd ;
A plump-arm'd ostleress and a stable
wench
Came running at the call, and help'd
us down.
Then stopt a buxom hostess forth, and
sail'd,
Full-blown, before us into rooms which
gave
Upon a pillar'd porch, the bases lost
In laurel. Her we ask'd of that and
this,
And who were tutors. 'Lady Blanche,'
she said,
'And Lady Psyche.' 'Which was
prettiest, ²³⁰
Best natured ?' 'Lady Psyche.' 'Hers
are we,'
One voice, we cried ; and I sat down
and wrote
In such a hand as when a field of corn
Bows all its ears before the roaring
East :

'Three ladies of the Northern em-
pire pray
Your Highness would enroll them with
your own,
As Lady Psyche's pupils.'

This I seal'd ;
The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,
And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung,
And raised the blinding bandage from
his eyes. ²⁴⁰
I gave the letter to be sent with dawn ;
And then to bed, where half in doze I
seem'd
To float about a glimmering night, and
watch
A full sea glazed with muffled moon-
light swell
On some dark shore just seen that it
was rich.

As thro' the land at eve we went,
And pluck'd the ripen'd ears,
We fell out, my wife and I,
O, we fell out, I know not why,
And kiss'd again with tears. ²⁵⁰
And blessings on the falling out
That all the more endears,
When we fall out with those we love
And kiss again with tears !
For when we came where lies the child
We lost in other years,
There above the little grave,
O, there above the little grave,
We kiss'd again with tears.

II

At break of day the College Portress
came ;
She brought us academic silks, in hue
The lilac, with a silken hood to each,
And zoned with gold ; and now when
these were on,
And we as rich as moths from dusk
cocoons,
She, curtsying her obeisance, let us
know
The Princess Ida waited. Out we
paced,
I first, and following thro' the porch
that sang
All round with laurel, issued in a court
Compact of lucid marbles, boss'd with
lengths ¹⁰
Of classic frieze, with ample awnings
gay
Betwixt the pillars, and with great
urns of flowers.
The Muses and the Graces, group'd in
threes,
Enring'd a billowing fountain in the
midst,
And here and there on lattice edges
lay
Or book or lute ; but hastily we past.
And up a flight of stairs into the hall.

There at a board by tome and paper
sat,
With two tame leopards couch'd be-
side her throne, ¹⁹
All beauty compass'd in a female form,
The Princess ; liker to the inhabitant
Of some clear planet close upon the
sun,
Than our man's earth ; such eyes were
in her head,

And so much grace and power, breathing down
From over her arch'd brows, with every turn
Lived thro' her to the tips of her long hands,
And to her feet. She rose her height, and said :

'We give you welcome; not without redound
Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,
The first-fruits of the stranger; after-time,
And that full voice which circles round the grave,
Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.
What! are the ladies of your land so tall?'
'We of the court,' said Cyril. 'From the court,'
She answer'd, 'then ye know the Prince?' and he:
'The climax of his age! as tho' there were
One rose in all the world, your Highness that,
He worships your ideal.' She replied:
'We scarcely thought in our own hall to hear
This barren verbiage, current among men,
Light coin, the tinsel clink of compliment.
Your flight from out your bookless wilds would seem
As arguing love of knowledge and of power;
Your language proves you still the child. Indeed,
We dream not of him; when we set our hand
To this great work, we purposed with ourself
Never to wed. You likewise will do well,
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling
The tricks which make us toys of men, that so
Some future time, if so indeed you will,
You may with those self-styled our lords ally
Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with scale.'

At those high words, we, conscious of ourselves,
Perused the matting; then an officer
Rose up, and read the statutes, such as these:
Not for three years to correspond with home;
Not for three years to cross the liberties;
Not for three years to speak with any men;
And many more, which hastily subscribed,
We enter'd on the boards. And 'Now,' she cried,
'Ye are green wood, see ye warp not. Look, our hall!
Our statutes!—not of those that men desire,
Sleek Odalisques, or oracles of mode,
Nor stunted squaws of West or East; but she
That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she
The foundress of the Babylonian wall,
The Carian Artemisia strong in war,
The Rhodope that built the pyramid,
Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene
That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows
Of Agrippina. Dwell with these, and lose
Convention, since to look on noble forms
Makes noble thro' the sensuous organism
That which is higher. O, lift your natures up;
Embrace our aims; work out your freedom. Girls,
Knowledge is now no more a fountain seal'd!
Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,
The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite
And slander, die. Better not be at all
Than not be noble. Leave us; you may go.
To-day the Lady Psyche will harangue
The fresh arrivals of the week before;
For they press in from all the provinces,
And fill the hive.'
She spoke, and bowing waved
Dismissal; back again we crost the court

To Lady Psyche's. As we enter'd in,
 There sat along the forms, like morn-
 ing doves
 That sun their milky bosoms on the
 thatch,
 A patient range of pupils; she herself
 Erect behind a desk of satin-wood, 90
 A quick brunette, well-moulded, fal-
 con-eyed,
 And on the lither side, or so she look'd,
 Of twenty summers. At her left, a
 child,
 In shining draperies, headed like a
 star,
 Her maiden babe, a double April old,
 Aglafa slept. We sat; the lady
 glanced;
 Then Florian, but no livelier than the
 dame
 That whisper'd 'Asses' ears' among
 the sedge,
 'My sister.' 'Comely, too, by all
 that's fair,'
 Said Cyril. 'O, hush, hush!' and she
 began. 106

'This world was once a fluid haze
 of light,
 Till toward the centre set the starry
 tides,
 And eddied into suns, that wheeling
 cast
 The planets; then the monster, then
 the man;
 Tattoo'd or woaded, winter-clad in
 skins,
 Raw from the prime, and crushing
 down his mate,
 As yet we find in barbarous isles, and
 here
 Among the lowest.'
 Thereupon she took
 A bird's-eye view of all the ungracious
 past;
 Glanced at the legendary Amazon 110
 As emblematic of a nobler age;
 Appraised the Lycian custom, spoke
 of those
 That lay at wine with Lar and Lu-
 cumo;
 Ran down the Persian, Grecian, Roman
 lines
 Of empire, and the woman's state in
 each,
 How far from just; till warming with
 her theme

She fulminated out her scorn of laws
 Salique
 And little-footed China, touch'd on
 Mahomet
 With much contempt, and came to
 chivalry,
 When some respect, however slight,
 was paid 120
 To woman, superstition all awry.
 However, then commenced the dawn:
 a beam
 Had slanted forward, falling in a
 land
 Of promise; fruit would follow. Deep,
 indeed,
 Their debt of thanks to her who first
 had dared
 To leap the rotten pales of prejudice,
 Disyoke their necks from custom, and
 assert
 None lordlier than themselves but
 that which made
 Woman and man. She had founded;
 they must build.
 Here might they learn whatever men
 were taught. 130
 Let them not fear, some said their
 heads were less;
 Some men's were small, not they the
 least of men;
 For often fineness compensated size.
 Besides the brain was like the hand,
 and grew
 With using; thence the man's, if more
 was more.
 He took advantage of his strength to
 be
 First in the field; some ages had been
 lost;
 But woman ripen'd earlier, and her
 life
 Was longer; and albeit their glorious
 names
 Were fewer, scatter'd stars, yet since
 in truth 140
 The highest is the measure of the man,
 And not the Kaffir, Hottentot, Malay,
 Nor those horn-handed breakers of
 the glebe,
 But Homer, Plato, Verulam, even so
 With woman; and in arts of govern-
 ment
 Elizabeth and others, arts of war
 The peasant Joan and others, arts of
 grace
 Sappho and others vied with any man;

And, last not least, she who had left
her place,
And bow'd her state to them, that
they might grow¹⁵⁰
To use and power on this oasis, lapt
In the arms of leisure, sacred from
the blight
Of ancient influence and scorn.

At last
She rose upon a wind of prophecy
Dilating on the future: 'everywhere
Two heads in council, two beside the
hearth,
Two in the tangled business of the
world,
Two in the liberal offices of life.
Two plummets dropt for one to sound
the abyss
Of science and the secrets of the mind;
Musician, painter, sculptor, critic,
more;¹⁶¹
And everywhere the broad and boun-
teous Earth
Should bear a double growth of those
rare souls,
Poets, whose thoughts enrich the blood
of the world.'

She ended here, and beckon'd us;
the rest
Parted; and, glowing full-faced wel-
come, she
Began to address us, and was moving
on
In gratulation, till as when a boat
Tacks and the slacken'd sail flaps, all
her voice
Faltering and fluttering in her throat,
she cried,¹⁷⁰
'My brother!' 'Well, my sister.'
'O,' she said,
'What do you here? and in this dress?
and these?
Why, who are these? a wolf within
the fold!
A pack of wolves! the Lord be gra-
cious to me!
A plot, a plot, a plot, to ruin all!'
'No plot, no plot,' he answer'd.
'Wretched boy,
How saw you not the inscription on
the gate,
LET NO MAN ENTER IN ON PAIN OF
DEATH?'
'And if I had,' he answer'd, 'who
could think

The softer Adams of your Academe
O sister, Sirens tho' they be, were
such¹⁸¹
As chanted on the blanching bones of
men?'
'But you will find it otherwise,' she
said.

'You jest; ill jesting with edge-tools!
my vow
Binds me to speak, and O that iron will,
That axelike edge unturnable, our
Head,

The Princess!' 'Well then, Psyche,
take my life,
And nail me like a weasel on a grange
For warning; bury me beside the gate,
And cut this epitaph above my bones:
*Here lies a brother by a sister slain, 191,
All for the common good of womankind.'*
'Let me die too,' said Cyril, 'having
seen

And heard the Lady Psyche.'
I struck in.
'Albeit so mask'd, madam, I love the
truth;
Receive it, and in me behold the Prince
Your countryman, affianced years ago
To the Lady Ida. Here, for here she
was,
And thus—what other way was left?
—I came.'

'O sir, O Prince, I have no country,
none;²⁰⁰
If any, this; but none. Whate'er I
was
Disrooted, what I am is grafted here.
Affianced, sir? love-whispers may not
breathe
Within this vestal limit, and how
should I,
Who am not mine, say, live? The
thunderbolt
Hangs silent; but prepare. I speak,
it falls.'

'Yet pause,' I said: 'for that inscrip-
tion there,
I think no more of deadly lurks
therein,
Than in a clapper clapping in a garth,
To scare the fowl from fruit; if more
there be,²¹⁰
If more and acted on, what follows?
war;
Your own work marr'd; for this your
Academe,
Whichever side be victor, in the hallos

Will topple to the trumpet down, and
 With ^{pass} all fair theories only made to
 gild
 A stormless summer.' 'Let the Prin-
 cess judge
 Of that,' she said: 'farewell, sir — and
 to you.
 I shudder at the sequel, but I go.'

'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I re-
 join'd,
 The fifth in line from that old Flo-
 rian,
 Yet hangs his portrait in my father's
 hall — ²²⁰
 The gaunt old baron with his beetle
 brow
 Sun-shaded in the heat of dusty
 fights —
 As he bestrode my grandsire, when he
 fell,
 And all else fled? we point to it, and
 we say,
 The loyal warmth of Florian is not
 cold,
 But branches current yet in kindred
 veins.'
 'Are you that Psyche,' Florian added;
 'she
 With whom I sang about the morning
 hills,
 Flung ball, flew kite, and raced the
 purple fly, ²³⁰
 And snared the squirrel of the glen?
 are you
 That Psyche, wont to bind my throbbing
 brow,
 To smooth my pillow, mix the foaming
 draught
 Of fever, tell me pleasant tales, and
 read
 My sickness down to happy dreams?
 are you
 That brother-sister Psyche, both in
 one?
 You were that Psyche, but what are
 you now?'
 'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said, 'for
 whom
 I would be that forever which I seem,
 Woman, if I might sit beside your
 feet, ²⁴⁰
 And glean your scatter'd sapience.'
 Then once more,
 'Are you that Lady Psyche,' I began,

'That on her bridal morn before ~~she~~
 past
 From all her old companions, when
 the king
 Kiss'd her pale cheek, declared that
 ancient ties
 Would still be dear beyond the south-
 ern hills;
 That were there any of our people
 there
 In want or peril, there was one to hear
 And help them? look! for such are
 these and I.'
 'Are you that Psyche,' Florian ask'd,
 'to whom, ²⁵⁰
 In gentler days, your arrow-wounded
 fawn
 Came flying while you sat beside the
 well?
 The creature laid his muzzle on your
 lap
 And sobb'd, and you sobb'd with it,
 and the blood
 Was sprinkled on your kirtle, and you
 wept.
 That was fawn's blood, not brother's,
 yet you wept.
 O, by the bright head of my little
 niece,
 You were that Psyche, and what are
 you now?'
 'You are that Psyche,' Cyril said
 again, ²⁵⁵
 'The mother of the sweetest little maid
 That ever crow'd for kisses.'
 'Out upon it!'
 She answer'd, 'peace! and why
 should I not play
 The Spartan Mother with emotion, be
 The Lucius Junius Brutus of my kind?
 Him you call great; he for the common
 weal,
 The fading politics of mortal Rome,
 As I might slay this child, if good nees
 were,
 Slew both his sons; and I, shall I, on
 whom
 The secular emancipation turns
 Of half this world, be swerved from
 right to save ²⁷⁰
 A prince, a brother? a little will I
 yield.
 Best so, perchance, for us, and well for
 you.
 O, hard when love and duty clash! I
 fear

My conscience will not count me fleckless ; yet —

Hear my conditions: promise — otherwise

You perish — as you came, to slip away
To-day, to-morrow, soon. It shall be said,

These women were too barbarous, would not learn ;

They fled, who might have shamed us.
Promise, all.'

What could we else, we promised each ; and she, ²⁸⁰
Like some wild creature newly-caged, commenced

A to-and-fro, so pacing till she paused
By Florian ; holding out her lily arms
Took both his hands, and smiling faintly said :

'I knew you at the first ; tho' you have grown

You scarce have alter'd. I am sad and glad

To see you, Florian. I give thee to death,

My brother ! it was duty spoke, not I.
My needful seeming harshness, pardon it.

Our mother, is she well ?

With that she kiss'd
His forehead, then, a moment after, clung ²⁹¹

About him, and betwixt them blossom'd up

From out a common vein of memory
Sweet household talk, and phrases of the hearth,

And far allusion, till the gracious dews
Began to glisten and to fall ; and while,
They stood, so rapt, we gazing, came a voice,

'I brought a message here from Lady Blanche.'

Back started she, and turning round we saw

The Lady Blanche's daughter where she stood, ³⁰⁰

Melissa, with her hand upon the lock,
A rosy blonde, and in a college gown,
That clad her like an April daffodilly —

Her mother's color — with her lips apart,

And all her thoughts as fair within her eyes,

As bottom agates seen to wave and float

In crystal currents of clear morning seas.

So stood that same fair creature at the door.

Then Lady Psyche, 'Ah — Melissa — you !

You heard us ?' and Melissa, 'O, pardon me ! ³¹⁰

I heard, I could not help it, did not wish ;

But, dearest lady, pray you fear me not,
Nor think I bear that heart within my breast,

To give three gallant gentlemen to death.'

'I trust you,' said the other, 'for we two

Were always friends, none closer, elm and vine ;

But yet your mother's jealous temperament —

Let not your prudence, dearest, drowse, or prove

The Danaïd of a leaky vase, for fear
This whole foundation ruin, and I lose ³²⁰

My honor, these their lives.' 'Ah, fear me not,'

Replied Melissa ; 'no — I would not tell,

No, not for all Aspasia's cleverness,
No, not to answer, madam, all those hard things

That Sheba came to ask of Solomon.'

'Be it so,' the other, 'that we still may lead

The new light up, and culminate in peace,

For Solomon may come to Sheba yet.'

Said Cyril, 'Madam, he the wisest man

Feasted the woman wisest then, in halls ³³⁰

Of Lebanonian cedar ; nor should you —

Tho', madam, you should answer, we would ask —

Less welcome find among us, if you came

Among us, debtors for our lives to you,
Myself for something more.' He said not what,

But 'Thanks,' she answer'd, 'go; we
have been too long
Together; keep your hoods about the
face;
They do so that affect abstraction
here.

Push'd her flat hand against his face
and laugh'd;
And thus our conference closed.
And then we strolled
For half the day thro' stately thea-
tres



'The Lady Blanche's daughter where she stood,
Melissa, with her hand upon the lock'

Speak little; mix not with the rest;
and hold
Your promise. All, I trust, may yet
be well.' 340

We turn'd to go, but Cyril took the
child,
And held her round the knees against
his waist,
And blew the swollen cheek of a
trumpeter,
While Psyche watch'd them, smiling,
and the child

Bench'd crescent-wise. In each we
sat, we heard
The grave professor. On the lecture
slate
The circle rounded under female hands
With flawless demonstration; follow'd
then 351
A classic lecture, rich in sentiment,
With scraps of thunderous epic lilted
out
By violet-hooded Doctors, elegies
And quoted odes, and jewels five
words-long

That on the stretch'd forefinger of all
Time
Sparkle forever. Then we dipt in all
That treats of whatsoever is, the state,
The total chronicles of man, the mind,
The morals, something of the frame,
the rock, ³⁶⁰
The star, the bird, the fish, the shell,
the flower,
Electric, chemic laws, and all the rest,
And whatsoever can be taught and
known;
Till like three horses that have broken
fence,
And glutted all night long breast-deep
in corn,
We issued gorged with knowledge,
and I spoke:
'Why, sirs, they do all this as well as
we.'
'They hunt old trails,' said Cyril,
'very well;
But when did woman ever yet invent?'
'Ungracious!' answer'd Florian;
'have you learnt ³⁷⁰
No more from Psyche's lecture, you
that talk'd
The trash that made me sick, and
almost sad?'
'O, trash,' he said, 'but with a kernel
in it!
Should I not call her wise who made
me wise?
And learnt? I learnt more from her
in a flash
Than if my brainpan were an empty
hull,
And every Muse tumbled a science in.
A thousand hearts lie fallow in these
halls,
And round these halls a thousand
baby loves
Fly twanging headless arrows at the
hearts, ³⁸⁰
Whence follows many a vacant pang;
but O,
With me, sir, enter'd in the bigger
boy,
The head of all the golden-shafted
firm,
The long-limb'd lad that had a Psyche
too;
He cleft me thro' the stomacher. And
now
What think you of it, Florian? do I
chase

The substance or the shadow? will it
hold?
I have no sorcerer's malison on me,
No ghostly hauntings like his High-
ness. I
Flatter myself that always every-
where ³⁹⁰
I know the substance when I see it.
Well,
Are castles shadows? Three of them?
Is she
The sweet proprietress a shadow? If
not,
Shall those three castles patch my
tatter'd coat?
For dear are those three castles to my
wants,
And dear is sister Psyche to my
heart,
And two dear things are one of double
worth;
And much I might have said, but that
my zone
Unmann'd me. Then the Doctors! O,
to hear
The Doctors! O, to watch the thirsty
plants ⁴⁰⁰
Imbibing! once or twice I thought to
roar,
To break my chain, to shake my
mane; but thou,
Modulate me, soul of mincing mim-
icry!
Make liquid treble of that bassoon, my
throat;
Abase those eyes that ever loved to
meet
Star-sisters answering under crescent
brows;
Abate the stride which speaks of man,
and loose
A flying charm of blushes o'er this
cheek,
Where they like swallows coming out
of time
Will wonder why they came. But
hark the bell ⁴¹⁰
For dinner, let us go!'
And in we stream'd
Among the columns, pacing staid and
still
By twos and threes, till all from end
to end
With beauties every shade of brown
and fair
In colors gayer than the morning mist,

The long hall glitter'd like a bed of
flowers.
How might a man not wander from
his wits
Pierced thro' with eyes, but that I
kept mine own
Intent on her, who rapt in glorious
dreams,
The second-sight of some Astræan age,
Sat compass'd with professors; they,
the while, ⁴²¹
Discuss'd a doubt and tost it to and
fro.
A clamor thicken'd, mixt with inmost
terms
Of art and science; Lady Blanche
alone
Of faded form and haughtiest linca-
ments,
With all her autumn tresses falsely
brown,
Shot sidelong daggers at us, a tiger-
cat
In act to spring.
At last a solemn grace
Concluded, and we sought the gar-
dens. There
One walk'd reciting by herself, and
one ⁴³⁰
In this hand held a volume as to read,
And smoothen'd a petted peacock down
with that.
Some to a low song oar'd a shallop by
Or under arches of the marble bridge
Hung, shadow'd from the heat; some
hid and sought
In the orange thickets; others tost a
ball
Above the fountain-jets, and back
again
With laughter; others lay about the
lawns,
Of the older sort, and murmur'd that
their May
Was passing — what was learning unto
them? ⁴⁴⁰
They wish'd to marry; they could
rule a house;
Men hated learned women. But we
three
Sat muffled like the Fates; and often
came
Melissa hitting all we saw with shafts
Of gentle satire, kin to charity,
That harm'd not. Then day droopt;
the chapel bells

Call'd us; we left the walks; we
mixt with those
Six hundred maidens clad in purest
white,
Before two streams of light from wall
to wall,
While the great organ almost burst
his pipes, ⁴⁵⁰
Groaning for power, and rolling thro'
the court
A long melodious thunder to the sound
Of solemn psalms and silver litanies,
The work of Ida, to call down from
heaven
A blessing on her labors for the world.

Sweet and low, sweet and low,
Wind of the western sea,
Low, low, breathe and blow,
Wind of the western sea!
Over the rolling waters go, ⁴⁶⁰
Come from the dying moon, and blow,
Blow him again to me;
While my little one, while my pretty one
sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,
Father will come to thee soon;
Rest, rest, on mother's breast,
Father will come to thee soon;
Father will come to his babe in the
nest,
Silver sails all out of the west
Under the silver moon; ⁴⁷⁰
Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one,
sleep.

III

Morn in the white wake of the morn-
ing star
Came furrowing all the orient into
gold.
We rose, and each by other drest with
care
Descended to the court that lay three
parts
In shadow, but the Muses' heads were
touch'd
Above the darkness from their native
East.

There while we stood beside the
fount, and watch'd
Or seem'd to watch the dancing bub-
ble, approach'd
Melissa, tinged with wan from lack
of sleep,

Or grief, and glowing round her dewy eyes¹⁰
 The circled Iris of a night of tears;
 And 'Fly,' she cried, 'O fly, while yet you may!
 My mother knows.' And when I ask'd her 'how,'
 'My fault,' she wept, 'my fault! and yet not mine;
 Yet mine in part. O, hear me, pardon me!
 My mother, 'tis her wont from night to night
 To rail at Lady Psyche and her side.
 She says the Princess should have been the Head,
 Herself and Lady Psyche the two arms;
 And so it was agreed when first they came;²⁰
 But Lady Psyche was the right hand now,
 And she the left, or not or seldom used;
 Hers more than half the students, all the love.
 And so last night she fell to canvass you,
 Her countrywomen! she did not envy her.
 "Who ever saw such wild barbarians? Girls?—more like men!" and at these words the snake,
 My secret, seem'd to stir within my breast;
 And O, sirs, could I help it, but my cheek
 Began to burn and burn, and her lynx eye³⁰
 To fix and make me hotter, till she laugh'd:
 "O marvellously modest maiden, you! Men! girls, like men! why, if they had been men
 You need not set your thoughts in rubric thus
 For wholesale comment." Pardon, I am shamed
 That I must needs repeat for my excuse
 What looks so little graceful: "men"—for still
 My mother went revolving on the word—
 "And so they are,—very like men indeed—
 And with that woman closeted for hours!"⁴⁰

Then came these dreadful words out one by one,
 "Why—these—*are*—men;" I shudder'd; "and you know it."
 "O, ask me nothing," I said. "And she knows too,
 And she conceals it." So my mother clutch'd
 The truth at once, but with no word from me;
 And now thus early risen she goes to inform
 The Princess. Lady Psyche will be crush'd;
 But you may yet be saved, and therefore fly;
 But heal me with your pardon ere you go.'

'What pardon, sweet Melissa, for a blush?'⁵⁰
 Said Cyril: 'Pale one, blush again; than wear
 Those lilies, better blush our lives away.
 Yet let us breathe for one hour more in heaven.'
 He added, 'lest some classic angel speak
 In scorn of us, "They mounted, Gany-medes,
 To tumble, Vulcans, on the second morn."
 But I will melt this marble into wax
 To yield us farther furlough;' and he went.

Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought
 He scarce would prosper. 'Tell us,' Florian ask'd,⁶⁰
 'How grew this feud betwixt the right and left.'
 'O, long ago,' she said, 'betwixt these two
 Division smoulders hidden; 'tis my mother,
 Too jealous, often fretful as the wind
 Pent in a crevice: much I bear with her.
 I never knew my father, but she says—
 God help her!—she was wedded to a fool;
 And still she rail'd against the state of things.

She had the care of Lady Ida's youth,
 And from the Queen's decease she
 brought her up. ⁷⁰
 But when your sister came she won
 the heart
 Of Ida; they were still together,
 grew —
 For so they said themselves — inoscu-
 lated;
 Consonant chords that shiver to one
 note;
 One mind in all things. Yet my mo-
 ther still
 Affirms your Psyche thieved her
 theories,
 And angled with them for her pupil's
 love;
 She calls her plagiarist, I know not
 what.
 But I must go; I dare not tarry,' and
 light,
 As flies the shadow of a bird, she
 fled. ⁸⁰

Then murmur'd Florian, gazing
 after her:
 'An open-hearted maiden, true and
 pure.
 If I could love, why this were she.
 How pretty
 Her blushing was, and how she blush'd
 again,
 As if to close with Cyril's random
 wish!
 Not like your Princess cramm'd with
 erring pride,
 Nor like poor Psyche whom she drags
 in tow.'

'The crane,' I said, 'may chatter
 of the crane,
 The dove may murmur of the dove,
 but I
 An eagle clung an eagle to the
 sphere. ⁹⁰
 My princess, O my princess! true she
 errs,



'Melissa shook her doubtful curls, and thought
 He scarce would prosper'

But in her own grand way ; being
 herself
 Three times more noble than three
 score of men,
 She sees herself in every woman else,
 And so she wears her error like a
 crown
 To blind the truth and me. For her,
 and her,
 Hebes are they to hand ambrosia, mix
 The nectar ; but — ah, she — whence'er
 she moves
 The Samian Herè rises, and she speaks
 A Memnon smitten with the morning
 sun.' 100

So saying from the court we paced,
 and gain'd
 The terrace ranged along the northern
 front,
 And leaning there on those balusters,
 high
 Above the empurpled champaign,
 drank the gale
 That blown about the foliage under-
 neath,
 And sated with the innumerable rose,
 Beat balm upon our eyelids. Hither
 came
 Cyril, and yawning, 'O hard task,'
 he cried :
 'No fighting shadows here. I forced
 a way
 Thro' solid opposition crabb'd and
 gnarl'd. 110
 Better to clear prime forests, heave
 and thump
 A league of street in summer solstice
 down,
 Than hammer at this reverend gentle-
 woman.
 I knock'd and, bidden, enter'd ; found
 her there
 At point to move, and settled in her
 eyes
 The green malignant light of coming
 storm.
 Sir, I was courteous, every phrase
 well-oil'd,
 As man's could be ; yet maiden-meek
 I pray'd
 Concealment. She demanded who
 we were,
 And why we came ? I fabled nothing
 fair, 120
 But, your example pilot, told her all.

Up went the hush'd amaze of hand
 and eye.
 But when I dwelt upon your old affi-
 ance,
 She answer'd sharply that I talk'd
 astray.
 I urged the fierce inscription on the
 gate,
 And our three lives. 'True — we had
 limed ourselves
 With open eyes, and we must take
 the chance.
 But such extremes, I told her, well
 might harm
 The woman's cause. "Not more than
 now," she said,
 "So puddled as it is with favoritism."
 I tried the mother's heart. Shame
 might befall 131
 Melissa, knowing, saying not she
 knew ;
 Her answer was, "Leave me to deal
 with that."
 I spoke of war to come and many
 deaths,
 And she replied, her duty was to
 speak,
 And duty duty, clear of consequences.
 I grew discouraged, sir ; but since I
 knew
 No rock so hard but that a little wave
 May beat admission in a thousand
 years,
 I recommenced : "Decide not ere you
 pause. 140
 I find you here but in the second place,
 Some say the third — the authentic
 foundress you.
 I offer boldly ; we will seat you high-
 est.
 Wink at our advent ; help my prince
 to gain
 His rightful bride, and here I promise
 you
 Some palace in our land, where you
 shall reign
 The head and heart of all our fair she-
 world,
 And your great name flow on with
 broadening time
 For ever." Well, she balanced this a
 little,
 And told me she would answer us to-
 day, 150
 Meantime be mute ; thus much, nor
 more I gain'd.'

He ceasing, came a message from
the Head.
'That afternoon the Princess rode to
take
The dip of certain strata to the north.
Would we go with her? we should find
the land
Worth seeing, and the river made a
fall
Out yonder;' then she pointed on to
where
A double hill ran up his furrowy forks
Beyond the thick-leaved platans of
the vale.

Agreed to, this, the day fled on thro'
all ¹⁶⁰
Its range of duties to the appointed
hour.
Then summon'd to the porch we went.
She stood
Among her maidens, higher by the
head,
Her back against a pillar, her foot on
one
Of those tame leopards. Kitten-like he
roll'd
And paw'd about her sandal. I drew
near;
I gazed. On a sudden my strange
seizure came
Upon me, the weird vision of our house.
The Princess Ida seem'd a hollow show,
Her gay-furr'd cats a painted fantasy,
Her college and her maidens empty
masks, ¹⁷¹
And I myself the shadow of a dream,
For all things were and were not. Yet
I felt
My heart beat thick with passion and
with awe;
Then from my breast the involuntary
sigh
Brake, as she smote me with the light
of eyes
That lent my knee desire to kneel, and
shook
My pulses, till to horse we got, and so
Went forth in long retinue following
up
The river as it narrow'd to the hills.

I rode beside her and to me she
said: ¹⁸¹
O friend, we trust that you esteem'd
us not

Too harsh to your companion yester
morn;
Unwillingly we spake.' 'No—not to
her,'
I answer'd, 'but to one of whom we
spake
Your Highness might have seem'd the
thing you say.'
'Again?' she cried, 'are you ambassa-
dresses
From him to me? we give you, being
strange,
A license; speak, and let the topic die.'

I stammer'd that I knew him—could
have wish'd— ¹⁹⁰
'Our king expects—was there no pre-
contract?
There is no truer-hearted—ah, you
seem
All he prefigured, and he could not see
The bird of passage flying south but
long'd
To follow. Surely, if your Highness
keep
Your purport, you will shock him even
to death,
Or baser courses, children of despair.'

'Poor boy,' she said, 'can he not
read—no books?
Quoit, tennis, ball—no games? nor
deals in that
Which men delight in, martial exer-
cise? ²⁰⁰
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,
Methinks he seems no better than a
girl;
As girls were once, as we ourself have
been.
We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt
with them.
We touch on our dead self, nor shun
to do it,
Being other—since we learnt our
meaning here,
To lift the woman's fallen divinity
Upon an even pedestal with man.'

She paused, and added with a haugh-
tier smile,
'And as to precontracts, we move, my
friend, ²¹⁰
At no man's beck, but know ourself
and thee,
O Vashti, noble Vashti! Summon'd out

She kept her state, and left the drunk-
en king
To brawl at Shushan underneath the
palms.'

'Alas, your Highness breathes full
East,' I said,
'On that which leans to you! I know
the Prince,
I prize his truth. And then how vast
a work

To assail this gray preëminence of man!
You grant me license; might I use it?
think;

Ere half be done perchance your life
may fail; 220

Then comes the feebler heiress of your
plan,

And takes and ruins all; and thus
your pains

May only make that footprint upon
sand

Which old-recurring waves of preju-
dice

Resmooth to nothing. Might I dread
that you,

With only Fame for spouse and your
great deeds

For issue, yet may live in vain, and
miss

Meanwhile what every woman counts
her due,

Love, children, happiness?'

And she exclaim'd,
'Peace, you young savage of the
Northern wild! 230

What! tho' your Prince's love were
like a god's,

Have we not made ourself the sacri-
fice?

You are bold indeed; we are not talk'd
to thus.

Yet will we say for children, would
they grew

Like field-flowers everywhere! we like
them well:

But children die; and let me tell you,
girl,

Howe'er you babble, great deeds can-
not die;

They with the sun and moon renew
their light

For ever, blessing those that look on
them.

Children — that men may pluck them
from our hearts, 240

Kill us with pity, break us with our-
selves —

O — children — there is nothing upon
earth

More miserable than she that has a son
And sees him err. Nor would we work
for fame;

Tho' she perhaps might reap the ap-
plause of Great,

Who learns the one *POU STO* whence
after-hands

May move the world, tho' she herself
effect

But little; wherefore up and act, nor
shrink

For fear our solid aim be dissipated
By frail successors. Would, indeed,

we had been, 250

In lieu of many mortal flies, a race
Of giants living each a thousand years,

That we might see our own work out,
and watch

'The sandy footprint harden into stone.'

I answer'd nothing, doubtful in my-
self

If that strange poet-princess with her
grand

Imaginations might at all be won.
And she broke out interpreting my
thoughts:

'No doubt we seem a kind of mon-
ster to you;

We are used to that; for women, up
till this 260

Cramp'd under worse than South-sea-
isle taboo,

Dwarfs of the gynæceum, fail so far
In high desire, they know not, cannot

guess

How much their welfare is a passion
to us.

If we could give them surer, quicker
proof —

O, if our end were less achievable
By slow approaches than by single act

Of immolation, any phase of death,
We were as prompt to spring against
the pikes,

Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it, 270
To compass our dear sisters' liberties.'

She bow'd as if to veil a noble tear;
And up we came to where the river
sloped



'The splendor falls on castle walls
And snowy summits old in story'

To plunge in cataract, shattering on
black blocks
A breadth of thunder. O'er it shook
the woods,
And danced the color, and, below,
stuck out
The bones of some vast bulk that lived
and roar'd
Before man was. She gazed awhile
and said,
'As these rude bones to us, are we to
her
That will be.' 'Dare we dream of
that,' I ask'd,
'Which wrought us, as the workman
and his work,

That practice betters?' 'How,' she
cried, 'you love
The metaphysics! read and earn our
prize,
A golden brooch. Beneath an emer-
ald plane
Sits Diotima, teaching him that died
Of hemlock — our device, wrought to
the life —
She rapt upon her subject, he on her;
For there are schools for all.' 'And
yet,' I said,
'Methinks I have not found among
them all
One anatomic.' 'Nay, we thought of
that,'

She answer'd, 'but it pleased us not;
 in truth
 We shudder but to dream our maids
 should ape
 Those monstrous males that carve the
 living hound,
 And cram him with the fragments of
 the grave,
 Or in the dark dissolving human heart,
 And holy secrets of this microcosm,
 Dabbling a shameless hand with shame-
 ful jest,
 Encarnalize their spirits. Yet we
 know
 Knowledge is knowledge, and this
 matter hangs.
 Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,
 Nor willing men should come among
 us, learnt, ³⁰¹
 For many weary moons before we
 came,
 This craft of healing. Were you sick,
 ourself
 Would tend upon you. To your ques-
 tion now,
 Which touches on the workman and
 his work.
 Let there be light and there was light;
 't is so,
 For was, and is, and will be, are but
 is,
 And all creation is one act at once,
 The birth of light; but we that are
 not all,
 As parts, can see but parts, now this,
 now that, ³¹⁰
 And live, perforce, from thought to
 thought, and make
 One act a phantom of succession.
 Thus
 Our weakness somehow shapes the
 shadow, Time;
 But in the shadow will we work, and
 mould
 The woman to the fuller day.'
 She spake
 With kindled eyes: we rode a league
 beyond,
 And, o'er a bridge of pinewood cross-
 ing, came
 On flowery levels underneath the crag,
 Full of all beauty. 'O, how sweet,'
 I said, —
 For I was half-oblivious of my mask, —
 'To linger here with one that loved
 us!' 'Yea,' ³²¹

She answer'd, 'or with fair philoso-
 phies
 That lift the fancy; for indeed these
 fields
 Are lovely, lovelier not the Elysian
 lawns,
 Where paced the demigods of old, and
 saw
 The soft white vapor streak the
 crowned towers
 Built to the Sun.' Then, turning to
 her maids,
 'Pitch our pavilion here upon the
 sward;
 Lay out the viands.' At the word,
 they raised
 A tent of satin, elaborately wrought
 With fair Corinna's triumph; here she
 stood, ³³¹
 Engirt with many a florid maiden-
 check,
 The woman-conqueror; woman-con-
 quer'd there
 The bearded Victor of ten-thousand
 hymns,
 And all the men mourn'd at his side
 But we
 Set forth to climb; then, climbing
 Cyril kept
 With Psyche, with Melissa Florian, I
 With mine affianced. Many a little
 hand
 Glanced like a touch of sunshine on
 the rocks,
 Many a light foot shone like a jewel
 set ³⁴⁰
 In the dark crag. And then we turn'd,
 we wound
 About the cliffs, the copses, out and in,
 Hammering and clinking, chattering
 stony names
 Of shale and hornblende, rag and trap
 and tuff,
 Amygdaloid and trachyte, till the sun
 Grew broader toward his death and
 fell, and all
 The rosy heights came out above the
 lawns.

The splendor falls on castle walls
 And snowy summits old in story; ³⁴⁹
 The long light shakes across the lakes,
 And the wild cataract leaps in glory.
 Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes fly-
 ing,
 Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
 dying.

O, hark, O, hear! how thin and clear,
And thinner, clearer, farther going!
O, sweet and far from cliff and scar
The horns of Elfland faintly blowing!
Blow, let us hear the purple glens replying,
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying,
dying.

O love, they die in yon rich sky, ³⁶⁰
They faint on hill or field or river;
Our echoes roll from soul to soul,
And grow for ever and for ever.
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes fly-
ing,
And answer, echoes, answer, dying, dying,
dying.

IV

'There sinks the nebulous star we call
the sun,
If that hypothesis of theirs be sound,'
Said Ida; 'let us down and rest;' and
we
Down from the lean and wrinkled pre-
cices,
By every coppice-feather'd chasm and
cleft,
Dropt thro' the ambrosial gloom to
where below
No bigger than a glowworm shone the
tent
Lamp-lit from the inner. Once she
lean'd on me,
Descending; once or twice she lent her
hand,
And blissful palpitations in the blood
Stirring a sudden transport rose and
fell. ¹¹

But when we planted level feet, and
dipt
Beneath the satin dome and enter'd in,
There leaning deep in broider'd down
we sank
Our elbows; on a tripod in the midst
A fragrant flame rose, and before us
glow'd
Fruit, blossom, viand, amber wine, and
gold.

Then she, 'Let some one sing to us;
lightlier move
The minutes fledged with music;' and
a maid,
Of those beside her, smote her harp
and sang. ²⁰

'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they
mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

'Fresh as the first beam glittering on a
sail,
That brings our friends up from the under-
world,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

'Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer
dawns ³¹
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering
square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no
more.

'Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy
feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more!'

She ended with such passion that
the tear ⁴¹
She sang of shook and fell, an erring
pearl
Lost in her bosom; but with some dis-
dain
Answer'd the Princess: 'If indeed
there haunt
About the moulder'd lodges of the past
So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to
men,
Well needs it we should cram our ears
with wool
And so pace by. But thine are fancies
hatch'd
In silken-folded idleness; nor is it
Wiser to weep a true occasion lost, ⁵⁰
But trim our sails, and let old by-gones
be,
While down the streams that float us
each and all
To the issue, goes, like glittering bergs
of ice,
Throne after throne, and molten on the
waste
Becomes a cloud; for all things serve
their time
Toward that great year of equal might
and rights.

Nor would I fight with iron laws, in
 the end
 Found golden. Let the past be past,
 let be
 Their cancell'd Babels ; tho' the rough
 kex break
 The starr'd mosaic, and the beard-
 blown goat 60
 Hang on the shaft, and the wild fig-
 tree split
 Their monstrous idols, care not while
 we hear
 A trumpet in the distance pealing
 news
 Of better, and Hope, a poising eagle,
 burns
 Above the unrisen morrow.' Then to
 me,
 'Know you no song of your own
 'land,' she said,
 'Not such as moans about the retro-
 spect,
 But deals with the other distance and
 the hues
 Of promise ; not a death's-head at the
 wine ?'

Then I remember'd one myself had
 made, 70
 What time I watch'd the swallow
 winging south
 From mine own land, part made long
 since, and part
 Now while I sang, and maiden-like as
 far
 As I could ape their treble did I
 sing.

'O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying
 south,
 Fly to her, and fall upon her gilded eaves,
 And tell her, tell her, what I tell to thee.

'O, tell her, Swallow, thou that knowest
 each,
 That bright and fierce and fickle is the
 South,
 And dark and true and tender is the
 North. 80

'O Swallow, Swallow, if I could follow,
 and light
 Upon her lattice, I would pipe and trill,
 And cheep and twitter twenty million loves.

'O, were I thou that she might take me in,
 And lay me on her bosom, and her heart
 Would rock the snowy cradle till I died!

'Why lingereth she to clothe her heart
 with love,
 Delaying as the tender ash delays
 To clothe herself, when all the woods are
 green ?

'O, tell her, Swallow, that thy brood is
 flown ; 90
 Say to her, I do but wanton in the South,
 But in the North long since my nest is
 made.

'O, tell her, brief is life but love is long,
 And brief the sun of summer in the North,
 And brief the moon of beauty in the South.

'O Swallow, flying from the golden
 woods,
 Fly to her, and pipe and woo her, and
 make her mine,
 And tell her, tell her, that I follow thee.'

I ceased, and all the ladies, each at
 each,
 Like the Ithacensian suitors in old
 time, 100
 Stared with great eyes, and laugh'd
 with alien lips,
 And knew not what they meant ; for
 still my voice
 Rang false. But smiling, 'Not for
 thee,' she said,
 'O Bulbul, any rose of Gulistan
 Shall burst her veil : marsh-divers,
 rather, maid,
 Shall croak thee sister, or the meadow-
 crake
 Grate her harsh kindred in the grass
 — and this
 A mere love-poem ! O, for such, my
 friend,
 We hold them slight ; they mind us
 of the time
 When we made bricks in Egypt.
 Knaves are men, 110
 That lute and flute fantastic tender-
 ness,
 And dress the victim to the offering up,
 And paint the gates of Hell with Para-
 dise,
 And play the slave to gain the tyranny.
 Poor soul ! I had a maid of honor
 once ;
 She wept her true eyes blind for such
 a one,
 A rogue of canzonets and serenades.
 I loved her. Peace be with her. She
 is dead.

So they blasphem'd the muse ! But
 great is song
 Used to great ends ; ourself have often
 tried ¹²⁰
 Valkyrian hymns, or into rhythm
 have dash'd
 The passion of the prophetess ; for
 song
 Is duer unto freedom, force and growth
 Of spirit, than to junketing and
 love.
 Love is it ? Would this same mock-
 love, and this
 Mock-Hymen were laid up like win-
 ter bats,
 Till all men grew to rate us at our
 worth,
 Not vassals to be beat, nor pretty
 babes
 To be dandled, no, but living wills,
 and spher'd
 Whole in ourselves and owed to none.
 Enough ! ¹³⁰
 But now to leaven play with profit,
 you,
 Know you no song, the true growth
 of your soil,
 That gives the manners of your coun-
 trywomen ?

She spoke and turn'd her sumptu-
 ous head with eyes
 Of shining expectation fixt on mine.
 Then while I dragg'd my brains for
 such a song,
 Cyril, with whom the bell-mouth'd
 glass had wrought,
 Or master'd by the sense of sport,
 began
 To troll a careless, careless tavern-
 catch
 Of Moll and Meg, and strange experi-
 ences ¹⁴⁰
 Unmeet for ladies. Florian nodded
 at him,
 I frowning ; Psyche flush'd and wann'd
 and shook ;
 The lilylike Melissa droop'd her brows.
 'Forbear,' the Princess cried ; 'For-
 bear, sir, I ;
 And heated thro' and thro' with wrath
 and love,
 I smote him on the breast. He started
 up ;
 There rose a shriek as of a city
 sack'd ;

Melissa clamor'd, 'Flee the death ;'
 'To horse !'
 Said Ida, 'home ! to horse !' and fled,
 as flies
 A troop of snowy doves athwart the
 dusk ¹⁵⁰
 When some one batters at the dove-
 cote doors,
 Disorderly the women. Alone I stood
 With Florian, cursing Cyril, vext at
 heart
 In the pavilion. There like parting
 hopes
 I heard them passing from me ; hoof
 by hoof,
 And every hoof a knell to my desires,
 Clang'd on the bridge ; and then an-
 other shriek,
 'The Head, the Head, the Princess,
 O the Head !'
 For blind with rage she miss'd the
 plank, and roll'd
 In the river. Out I sprang from glow
 to gloom ; ¹⁶⁰
 There whirl'd her white robe like a
 blossom'd branch
 Rapt to the horrible fall. A glance I
 gave,
 No more, but woman-vested as I was
 Plunged, and the flood drew ; yet I
 caught her ; then
 Oaring one arm, and bearing in my
 left
 The weight of all the hopes of half
 the world,
 Strove to buffet to land in vain. A
 tree
 Was half-disrooted from his place and
 stoop'd
 To drench his dark locks in the gur-
 gling wave
 Mid-channel. Right on this we drove
 and caught, ¹⁷⁰
 And grasping down the boughs I
 gain'd the shore.

There stood her maidens glimmer-
 ingly group'd
 In the hollow bank. One reaching
 forward drew
 My burthen from mine arms ; they
 cried, 'She lives.'
 They bore her back into the tent :
 but I,
 So much a kind of shame within me
 wrought,

Not yet endured to meet her opening
 eyes,
 Nor found my friends; but push'd
 alone on foot—
 For since her horse was lost I left her
 mine—
 Across the woods, and less from In-
 dian craft ¹⁸⁰
 Than beelike instinct hiveward, found
 at length
 The garden portals. Two great stat-
 ues, Art
 And Science, Caryatids, lifted up
 A weight of emblem, and betwixt
 were valves
 Of open-work in which the hunter
 rued
 His rash intrusion, manlike, but his
 brows
 Had sprouted, and the branches there-
 upon
 Spread out at top, and grimly spiked
 the gates.

A little space was left between the
 horns,
 Thro' which I clamber'd o'er at top
 with pain, ¹⁹⁰
 Dropt on the sward, and up the linden
 walks,
 And, tost on thoughts that changed
 from hue to hue,
 Now poring on the glowworm, now
 the star,
 I paced the terrace, till the Bear had
 wheel'd
 Thro' a great arc his seven slow
 suns.

A step
 Of lightest echo, then a loftier form
 Than female, moving thro' the uncer-
 tain gloom,
 Disturb'd me with the doubt 'if this
 were she,'
 But it was Florian. 'Hist, O, hist!'
 he said,
 'They seek us; out so late is out of
 rules. ²⁰⁰
 Moreover, "Seize the strangers" is
 the cry.
 How came you here?' I told him.
 'I,' said he,
 'Last of the train, a moral leper, I,
 To whom none spake, half-sick at
 heart, return'd.
 Arriving all confused among the rest

With hooded brows I crept into the
 hall,
 And, couch'd behind a Judith, under-
 neath
 The head of Holofernes peep'd and
 saw.
 Girl after girl was call'd to trial; each
 Disclaim'd all knowledge of us; last
 of all, ²¹⁰
 Melissa; trust me, sir, I pitied her.
 She, question'd if she knew us men,
 at first
 Was silent; closer prest, denied it not,
 And then, demanded if her mother
 knew,
 Or Psyche, she affirm'd not, or denied;
 From whence the Royal mind, familiar
 with her,
 Easily gather'd either guilt. She sent
 For Psyche, but she was not there;
 she call'd
 For Psyche's child to cast it from the
 doors;
 She sent for Blanche to accuse her
 face to face; ²²⁰
 And I slept out. But whither will
 you now?
 And where are Psyche, Cyril? both
 are fled;
 What, if together? that were not so
 well.
 Would rather we had never come! I
 dread
 His wildness, and the chances of the
 dark.'

'And yet,' I said, 'you wrong him
 more than I
 That struck him; this is proper to the
 clown,
 Tho' smock'd, or furr'd and purpled,
 still the clown,
 To harm the thing that trusts him,
 and to shame
 That which he says he loves. For
 Cyril, howe'er ²³⁰
 He deal in frolic, as to-night—the song
 Might have been worse and sinn'd in
 grosser lips
 Beyond all pardon—as it is, I hold
 These flashes on the surface are not he.
 He has a solid base of temperament;
 But as the water-lily starts and slides
 Upon the level in little puffs of wind,
 Tho' anchor'd to the bottom, such is
 he.'

Scarce had I ceased when from a
 tamarisk near
 Two Proctors leapt upon us, crying,
 'Names!' ²⁴⁰
 He, standing still, was clutch'd; but
 I began
 To thrid the musky-circled mazes,
 wind
 And double in and out the boles, and
 race
 By all the fountains. Fleet I was of
 foot;
 Before me shower'd the rose in flakes;
 behind
 I heard the puff'd pursuer; at mine
 ear
 Bubbled the nightingale and heeded
 not,
 And secret laughter tickled all my
 soul.
 At last I hook'd my ankle in a vine
 That claspt the feet of a Mnemosyne,
 And falling on my face was caught
 and known. ²⁵¹

They haled us to the Princess where
 she sat
 High in the hall; above her droop'd a
 lamp,
 And made the single jewel on her
 brow
 Burn like the mystic fire on a mast-
 head,
 Prophet of storm; a handmaid on
 each side
 Bow'd toward her, combing out her
 long black hair
 Damp from the river; and close be-
 hind her stood
 Eight daughters of the plough,
 stronger than men,
 Huge women blowzed with health,
 and wind, and rain, ²⁶⁰
 And labor. Each was like a Druid
 rock;
 Or like a spire of land that stands
 apart
 Cleft from the main, and wail'd about
 with mews.

Then, as we came, the crowd divid-
 ing clove
 An advent to the throne; and there
 beside,
 Half-naked as if caught at once from
 bed

And tumbled on the purple footcloth,
 lay
 The lily-shining child; and on the left,
 Bow'd on her palms and folded up
 from wrong,
 Her round white shoulder shaken with
 her sobs, ²⁷⁰
 Melissa knelt; but Lady Blanche erect
 Stood up and spake, an affluent orator:

'It was not thus, O Princess, in old
 days;
 You prized my counsel, lived upon
 my lips.
 I led you then to all the Castalies;
 I fed you with the milk of every Muse;
 I loved you like this kneeler, and you
 me
 Your second mother: those were gra-
 cious times.
 Then came your new friend; you
 began to change—
 I saw it and grieved—to slacken and
 to cool; ²⁸⁰
 Till taken with her seeming openness
 You turn'd your warmer currents all
 to her,
 To me you froze; this was my need
 for all.
 Yet I bore up in part from ancient
 love,
 And partly that I hoped to win you
 back,
 And partly conscious of my own
 deserts,
 And partly that you were my civil
 head,
 And chiefly you were born for some-
 thing great,
 In which I might your fellow-worker
 be,
 When time should serve; and thus a
 noble scheme ²⁹⁰
 Grew up from seed we two long since
 had sown;
 In us true growth, in her a Jonah's
 gourd,
 Up in one night and due to sudden
 sun.
 We took this palace; but even from
 the first
 You stood in your own light and
 darken'd mine.
 What student came but that you
 planed her path
 To Lady Psyche, younger, not so wise,

A foreigner, and I your country-
 woman,
 I your old friend and tried, she new
 in all?
 But still her lists were swell'd and
 mine were lean;
 Yet I bore up in hope she would be
 known.
 Then came these wolves; *they* knew
 her; *they* endured,
 Long-closeted with her the yestermorn,
 To tell her what they were, and she
 to hear.
 And me none told. Not less to an eye
 like mine,
 A lidless watcher of the public weal,
 Last night, their mask was patent,
 and my foot
 Was to you. But I thought again; I
 fear'd
 To meet a cold "We thank you, we
 shall hear of it
 From Lady Psyche;" you had gone
 to her,
 She told, perforce, and winning easy
 grace,
 No doubt, for slight delay, remain'd
 among us
 In our young nursery still unknown,
 the stem
 Less grain than touchwood, while my
 honest heat
 Were all miscounted as malignant
 haste
 To push my rival out of place and
 power.
 But public use required she should be
 known;
 And since my oath was ta'en for pub-
 lic use,
 I broke the letter of it to keep the
 sense.
 I spoke not then at first, but watch'd
 them well,
 Saw that they kept apart, no mischief
 done;
 And yet this day—tho' you should
 hate me for it—
 I came to tell you; found that you
 had gone,
 Ridden to the hills, she likewise.
 Now, I thought,
 That surely she will speak; if not,
 then I.
 Did she? These monsters blazon'd
 what they were,

According to the coarseness of their
 kind,
 For thus I hear; and known at last—
 my work—
 And full of cowardice and guilty
 shame—
 I grant in her some sense of shame—
 she flies;
 And I remain on whom to wreak your
 rage,
 I, that have lent my life to build up
 yours,
 I, that have wasted here health,
 wealth, and time,
 And talent, I—you know it—I will
 not boast;
 Dismiss me, and I prophesy your
 plan,
 Divorced from my experience, will be
 chaff
 For every gust of chance, and men
 will say
 We did not know the real light, but
 chased
 The wisp that flickers where no foot
 can tread.
 She ceased; the Princess answer'd
 coldly, 'Good;
 Your oath is broken; we dismiss you,
 go.
 For this lost lamb'—she pointed to
 the child—
 'Our mind is changed; we take it to
 ourself.'

Therewith the lady stretch'd a vulture
 throat,
 And shot from crooked lips a haggard
 smile.
 'The plan was mine. I built the nest,'
 she said,
 'To hatch the cuckoo. Rise!' and
 stoop'd to updrag
 Melissa. She, half on her mother propt,
 Half-drooping from her, turn'd her
 face, and cast
 A liquid look on Ida, full of prayer,
 Which melted Florian's fancy as she
 hung,
 A Niobeān daughter, one arm out,
 Appealing to the bolts of heaven; and
 while
 We gazed upon her came a little stir
 About the doors, and on a sudden rush'd
 Among us, out of breath, as one pur-
 sued,

A woman-post in flying raiment. Fear
 Stared in her eyes, and chalk'd her
 face, and wing'd
 Her transit to the throne, whereby she
 fell
 Delivering seal'd dispatches which the
 Head ³⁶⁰
 Took half-amazed, and in her lion's
 mood
 Tore open, silent we with blind surmise
 Regarding, while she read, till over
 brow
 And cheek and bosom brake the wrath-
 ful bloom
 As of some fire against a stormy cloud,
 When the wild peasant rights himself,
 the rick
 Flames, and his anger reddens in the
 heavens;
 For anger most it seem'd, while now
 her breast,
 Beaten with some great passion at her
 heart,
 Palpitated, her hand shook, and we
 heard ³⁷⁰
 In the dead hush the papers that she
 held
 Rustle. At once the lost lamb at her
 feet
 Sent out a bitter bleating for its dam.
 The plaintive cry jarr'd on her ire; she
 crush'd
 The scrolls together, made a sudden
 turn
 As if to speak, but, utterance failing
 her,
 She whirl'd them on to me, as who
 should say
 'Read,' and I read — two letters — one
 her sire's :

 'Fair daughter, when we sent the
 Prince your way
 We knew not your ungracious laws,
 which learnt, ³⁸⁰
 We, conscious of what temper you are
 built,
 Came all in haste to hinder wrong, but
 fell
 Into his father's hand, who has this
 night,
 You lying close upon this territory,
 Slipt round and in the dark invested
 you,
 And here he keeps me hostage for his
 son.'

The second was my father's, running
 thus :
 'You have our son; touch not a hair
 of his head;
 Render him up unscathed; give him
 your hand;
 Cleave to your contract — tho' indeed
 we hear ³⁹⁰
 You hold the woman is the better
 man;
 A rampant heresy, such as if it spread
 Would make all women kick against
 their lords
 Thro' all the world, and which might
 well deserve
 That we this night should pluck your
 palace down;
 And we will do it, unless you send us
 back
 Our son, on the instant, whole.'
 So far I read;
 And then stood up and spoke impet-
 uously :

 'O, not to pry and peer on your
 reserve,
 But led by golden wishes, and a
 hope ⁴⁰⁰
 The child of regal compact, did I
 break
 Your precinct; not a scorner of your
 sex
 But venerator, zealous it should be
 All that it might be. Hear me, for I
 bear,
 Tho' man, yet human, whatsoever
 your wrongs,
 From the flaxen curl to the gray lock
 a life
 Less mine than yours. My nurse
 would tell me of you;
 I babbled for you, as babies for the
 moon,
 Vague brightness; when a boy, you
 stoop'd to me
 From all high places, lived in all fair
 lights, ⁴¹⁰
 Came in long breezes rapt from inmost
 south
 And blown to inmost north; at eve and
 dawn
 With Ida, Ida, Ida, rang the woods;
 The leader wild-swan in among the
 stars
 Would clang it, and lapt in wreaths of
 glowworm light

The mellow breaker murmur'd Ida.
 Now,
 Because I would have reach'd you, had
 you been
 Sphered up with Cassiopeia, or the
 enthroned
 Persephone in Hades, now at length,
 Those winters of abeyance, all worn
 out,
 A man I came to see you ; but, indeed,⁴²⁰
 Not in this frequency can I lend full
 tongue,
 O noble Ida, to those thoughts that
 wait
 On you, their centre. Let me say but
 this,
 That many a famous man and woman,
 town
 And landskip, have I heard of, after
 seen
 The dwarfs of presage ; tho' when
 known, there grew
 Another kind of beauty in detail
 Made them worth knowing ; but in
 you I found
 My boyish dream involved and daz-
 zled down⁴³⁰
 And master'd, while that after-beauty
 makes
 Such head from act to act, from hour
 to hour,
 Within me, that except you slay me
 here,
 According to your bitter statute-book,
 I cannot cease to follow you, as they
 say
 The seal does music ; who desire you
 more
 Than growing boys their manhood ;
 dying lips,
 With many thousand matters left to
 do,
 The breath of life ; O, more than poor
 men wealth,
 Than sick men health — yours, yours,
 not mine — but half⁴⁴⁰
 Without you ; with you, whole ; and
 of those halves
 You worthiest ; and howe'er you block
 and bar
 Your heart with system out from mine,
 I hold
 That it becomes no man to nurse de-
 spair,
 But in the teeth of clench'd antago-
 nisms

To follow up the worthiest till he
 die.
 Yet that I came not all unauthorized
 Behold your father's letter.'
 On one knee
 Kneeling, I gave it, which she caught,
 and dash'd
 Unopen'd at her feet. A tide of
 fierce⁴⁵⁰
 Invective seem'd to wait behind her
 lips,
 As waits a river level with the dam
 Ready to burst and flood the world
 with foam ;
 And so she would have spoken, but
 there rose
 A hubbub in the court of half the
 maids
 Gather'd together ; from the illumined
 hall
 Long lanes of splendor slanted o'er a
 press
 Of snowy shoulders, thick as herded
 ewes,
 And rainbow robes, and gems and gem-
 like eyes,
 And gold and golden heads. They to
 and fro⁴⁶⁰
 Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some
 red, some pale,
 All open-mouth'd, all gazing to the
 light,
 Some crying there was an army in the
 land,
 And some that men were in the very
 walls,
 And some they cared not ; till a clamor
 grew
 As of a new-world Babel, woman-built,
 And worse-confounded. High above
 them stood
 The placid marble Muses, looking
 peace.
 Not peace she look'd, the Head ;
 but rising up
 Robed in the long night of her deep
 hair, so⁴⁷⁰
 To the open window moved, remain-
 ing there
 Fixt like a beacon-tower above the
 waves
 Of tempest, when the crimson-rolling
 eye
 Glares ruin, and the wild birds on the
 light

Dash themselves dead. She stretch'd
her arms and call'd
Across the tumult, and the tumult
fell.

'What fear ye, brawlers? am not I
your Head?
On me, me, me, the storm first breaks;
I dare
All these male thunderbolts; what is
it ye fear?
Peace! there are those to avenge us
and they come; ⁴⁸⁰
If not, — myself were like enough, O
girls,
To unfurl the maiden banner of our
rights,
And clad in iron burst the ranks of
war,

Or, falling, protomartyr of our cause,
Die; yet I blame you not so much for
fear;

Six thousand years of fear have made
you that

From which I would redeem you. But
for those

That stir this hubbub — you and you
— I know

Your faces there in the crowd — to-
morrow morn

We hold a great convention; then
shall they ⁴⁹⁰

That love their voices more than duty,
learn

With whom they deal, dismiss'd in
shame to live

No wiser than their mothers, house
hold stuff,



'They to and fro
Fluctuated, as flowers in storm, some red, some pale'

Live chattels, mincers of each other's
fame,
Full of weak poison, turnspits for the
clown,
The drunkard's football, laughing-
stocks of Time,
Whose brains are in their hands and
in their heels,
But fit to flaunt, to dress, to dance, to
thrum,
To tramp, to scream, to burnish, and
to scour,
For ever slaves at home and fools
abroad.' 500

She, ending, waved her hands;
thereat the crowd
Muttering, dissolved; then with a
smile, that look'd
A stroke of cruel sunshine on the
cliff,
When all the glens are drown'd in
azure gloom
Of thunder-shower, she floated to us
and said:

'You have done well and like a
gentleman,
And like a prince; you have our
thanks for all.
And you look well too in your woman's
dress.
Well have you done and like a gentle-
man.
You saved our life; we owe you bitter
thanks. 510
Better have died and spilt our bones in
the flood —
Then men had said — but now — what
hinders me
To take such bloody vengeance on you
both? —
Yet since our father — wasps in our
good hive,
You would be quenchers of the light
to be,
Barbarians, grosser than your native
bears —
O, would I had his sceptre for one
hour!
You that have dared to break our
bound, and gull'd
Our servants, wrong'd and lied and
thwarted us —
I wed with thee! I bound by pre-con-
tract 520

Your bride, your bonds slave! not tho'
all the gold
That veins the world were pack'd to
make your crown,
And every spoken tongue should lord
you. Sir,
Your falsehood and yourself are hate-
ful to us;
I trample on your offers and on
you.
Begone; we will not look upon you
more.
Here, push them out at gates.'
In wrath she spake.
Then those eight mighty daughters of
the plough
Bent their broad faces toward us and
address'd
Their motion. Twice I sought to plead
my cause, 530
But on my shoulder hung their heavy
hands,
The weight of destiny; so from her
face
They push'd us, down the steps, and
thro' the court,
And with grim laughter thrust us out
at gates.

We cross'd the street and gain'd a
petty mound
Beyond it, whence we saw the lights
and heard
The voices murmuring. While I lis-
ten'd, came 540
On a sudden the weird seizure and the
doubt.
I seem'd to move among a world of
ghosts;
The Princess with her monstrous
woman-guard, 540
The jest and earnest working side by
side,
The cataract and the tumult and the
kings
Were shadows; and the long fantastic
night
With all its doings had and had not
been,
And all things were and were not.
This went by
As strangely as it came, and on my
spirits
Settled a gentle cloud of melancholy —
Not long; I shook it off; for spite of
doubts

And sudden ghostly shadowings I was
 one
 To whom the touch of all mischance
 but came 550
 As night to him that sitting on a
 hill
 Sees the midsummer, midnight, Nor-
 way sun
 Set into sunrise ; then we moved away.

INTERLUDE

Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums
 That beat to battle where he stands;
 Thy face across his fancy comes,
 And gives the battle to his hands.
 A moment, while the trumpets blow,
 He sees his brood about thy knee;
 The next, like fire he meets the foe,
 And strikes him dead for thine and thee.

So Lilia sang. We thought her half-
 possess'd,
 She struck such warbling fury thro'
 the words; 10
 And, after, feigning pique at what she
 call'd
 The raillery, or grotesque, or false sub-
 lime —
 Like one that wishes at a dance to
 change
 The music — clapt her hands and cried
 for war,
 Or some grand fight to kill and make
 an end.
 And he that next inherited the tale,
 Half turning to the broken statue,
 said,
 'Sir Ralph has got your colors; if I
 prove
 Your knight, and fight your battle,
 what for me?'
 It chanced, her empty glove upon the
 tomb 20
 Lay by her like a model of her
 hand.
 She took it and she flung it. 'Fight,'
 she said,
 'And make us all we would be, great
 and good.'
 He knightlike in his cap instead of
 casque,
 A cap of Tyrol borrow'd from the
 hall,
 Arranged the favor, and assumed the
 Prince.

V

Now, scarce three paces measured from
 the mound.
 We stumbled on a stationary voice,
 And 'Stand, who goes?' 'Two from
 the palace,' I.
 'The second two; they wait,' he said,
 'pass on;
 His Highness wakes;' and one, that
 clash'd in arms,
 By glimmering lanes and walls of
 canvas led
 Threading the soldier-city, till we
 heard
 The drowsy folds of our great ensign
 shake
 From blazon'd lions o'er the imperial
 tent
 Whispers of war.
 Entering, the sudden light
 Dazed me, half-blind. I stood and
 seem'd to hear, 11
 As in a poplar grove when a light
 wind wakes
 A lisp of the innumerable leaf and
 dies,
 Each hissing in his neighbor's ear;
 and then
 A strangled titter, out of which there
 brake
 On all sides, clamoring etiquette to
 death,
 Unmeasured mirth; while now the two
 old kings
 Began to wag their baldness up and
 down,
 The fresh young captains flash'd their
 glittering teeth,
 The huge bush-bearded barons heaved
 and blew, 20
 And slain with laughter roll'd the
 gilded squire.

At length my sire, his rough cheek
 wet with tears,
 Panted from weary sides, 'King, you
 are free!
 We did but keep you surety for our
 son,
 If this be he, — or a draggled mawkin,
 thou,
 That tends her bristled grunterns in the
 sludge;'
 For I was drench'd with ooze, and torn
 with briars,

More crumpled than a poppy from the sheath,
 And all one rag, disprinc'd from head to heel.
 Then some one sent beneath his vaulted palm
 A whisper'd jest to some one near him,³⁰
 'Look,
 He has been among his shadows.'
 'Satan take
 The old women and their shadows!' —
 thus the king
 Roar'd — 'make yourself a man to
 fight with men.
 Go; Cyril told us all.'

As boys that slink
 From ferule and the trespass-chiding eye,
 Away we stole, and transient in a trice
 From what was left of faded woman-slough
 To sheathing splendors and the golden scale
 Of harness, issued in the sun, that now
 Leapt from the dewy shoulders of the earth,⁴¹
 And hit the Northern hills. Here
 Cyril met us,
 A little shy at first, but by and by
 We twain, with mutual pardon ask'd and given
 For stroke and song, resolder'd peace,
 whereon
 Follow'd his tale. Amazed he fled
 away
 Thro' the dark land, and later in the night
 Had come on Psyche weeping: 'then
 we fell
 Into your father's hand, and there she
 lies,
 But will not speak nor stir.'

He show'd a tent
 A stone-shot off; we enter'd in, and
 there⁵¹
 Among piled arms and rough accoutrements,
 Pitiful sight, wrapp'd in a soldier's
 cloak,
 Like some sweet sculpture draped
 from head to foot,
 And push'd by rude hands from its
 pedestal,
 All her fair length upon the ground
 she lay;

And at her head a follower of the camp,
 A charr'd and wrinkled piece of womanhood,
 Sat watching like a watcher by the dead.

Then Florian knelt, and 'Come,'
 he whisper'd to her,⁶⁰
 'Lift up your head, sweet sister; lie
 not thus.
 What have you done but right? you
 could not slay
 Me, nor your prince; look up, be
 comforted.

Sweet is it to have done the thing one
 ought,

When fallen in darker ways.' And
 likewise I:

'Be comforted; have I not lost her too,
 In whose least act abides the nameless
 charm

That none has else for me?' She
 heard, she moved,

She moan'd a folded voice; and up
 she sat,

And raised the cloak from brows as
 pale and smooth⁷⁰

As those that mourn half-shrouded
 over death

In deathless marble. 'Her,' she said,
 'my friend —

Parted from her — betray'd her cause
 and mine —

Where shall I breathe? why kept ye
 not your faith?

O base and bad! what comfort? none
 for me!

To whom remorseful Cyril, 'Yet I
 pray

Take comfort; live, dear lady, for
 your child!'

At which she lifted up her voice and
 cried:

'Ah me, my babe, my blossom, ah,
 my child,

My one sweet child, whom I shall see
 no more!⁸⁰

For now will cruel Ida keep her back;
 And either she will die from want of
 care,

Or sicken with ill-usage, when they
 say

The child is hers — for every little
 fault,



' All her fair length upon the ground she lay ;
And at her head a follower of the camp '

The child is hers ; and they will beat
my girl
Remembering her mother— O my
flower !
Or they will take her, they will make
her hard,
And she will pass me by in after-life
With some cold reverence worse than
were she dead.
Ill mother that I was to leave her
there, ⁹⁰
To lag behind, scared by the cry they
made,
The horror of the shame among them
all.
But I will go and sit beside the doors,
And make a wild petition night and
day,
Until they hate to hear me like a wind
Wailing for ever, till they open to me,
And lay my little blossom at my feet,
My babe, my sweet Aglafa, my one
child ;
And I will take her up and go my way,
And satisfy my soul with kissing her.
Ah ! what might that man not de-
serve of me

101

Who gave me back my child ? ' ' Be
comforted,'
Said Cyril, ' you shall have it ; ' but
again,
She veil'd her brows, and prone she
sank, and so,
Like tender things that being caught
feign death,
Spoke not, nor stirr'd.
By this a murmur ran
Thro' all the camp, and inward raced
the scouts
With rumor of Prince Arac hard at
hand.
We left her by the woman, and with
out
Found the gray kings at parle ; and
' Look you,' cried ¹¹⁰
My father, ' that our compact be ful-
fill'd.
You have spoilt this child ; she laughs
at you and man ;
She wrongs herself, her sex, and me,
and him.
But red-faced war has rods of steel
and fire ;
She yields, or war.'

Then Gama turn'd to me :
 'We fear, indeed, you spent a stormy
 time
 With our strange girl; and yet they
 say that still
 You love her. Give us, then, your
 mind at large :
 How say you, war or not ?'
 'Not war, if possible,
 O king,' I said, 'lest from the abuse
 of war,
 The desecrated shrine, the trampled
 year,
 The smouldering homestead, and the
 household flower
 Torn from the lintel — all the common
 wrong —
 A smoke go up thro' which I loom to her
 Three times a monster. Now she
 lightens scorn
 At him that mars her plan, but then
 would hate —
 And every voice she talk'd with ratify
 it,
 And every face she look'd on justify
 it —
 The general foe. More soluble is this
 knot
 By gentleness than war. I want her
 love.
 What were I nigher this altho' we
 dash'd
 Your cities into shards with cata-
 pults ? —
 She would not love — or brought her
 chain'd, a slave,
 The lifting of whose eyelash is my lord ?
 Not ever would she love, but brood-
 ing turn
 The book of scorn, till all my flitting
 chance
 Were caught within the record of her
 wrongs
 And crush'd to death; and rather,
 Sire, than this
 I would the old god of war himself
 were dead,
 Forgotten, rusting on his iron hills,
 Rotting on some wild shore with ribs
 of wreck,
 Or like an old-world mammoth bulk'd
 in ice,
 Not to be molten out.'
 And roughly spake
 My father : 'Tut, you know them
 not, the girls.

Boy, when I hear you prate I almost
 think
 That idiot legend credible. Look you,
 sir !
 Man is the hunter ; woman is his game.
 The sleek and shining creatures of the
 chase,
 We hunt them for the beauty of their
 skins ;
 They love us for it, and we ride them
 down.
 Wheedling and siding with them !
 Out ! for shame !
 Boy, there's no rose that's half so
 dear to them
 As he that does the thing they dare
 not do,
 Breathing and sounding beauteous
 battle, comes
 With the air of the trumpet round
 him, and leaps in
 Among the women, snares them by
 the score
 Flatter'd and fluster'd, wins, tho'
 dash'd with death
 He reddens what he kisses. Thus I
 won
 Your mother, a good mother, a good
 wife,
 Worth winning ; but this firebrand —
 gentleness
 To such as her ! if Cyril spake her
 true,
 To catch a dragon in a cherry net,
 To trip a tigress with a gossamer,
 Were wisdom to it.'
 'Yea, but, Sire,' I cried,
 'Wild natures need wise curbs. The
 soldier ? No !
 What dares not Ida do that she should
 prize
 The soldier ? I beheld her, when she
 rose
 The yesternight, and storming in ex-
 tremes
 Stood for her cause, and flung defiance
 down
 Gagelike to man, and had not shunn'd
 the death,
 No, not the soldier's ; yet I hold her,
 king,
 True woman ; but you clash them all
 in one,
 That have as many differences as we.
 The violet varies from the lily as
 far

As oak from elm. One loves the soldier, one
 The silken priest of peace, one this,
 one that,
 And some unworthily; their sinless
 faith,
 A maiden moon that sparkles on a sty,
 Glorifying clown and satyr; whence
 they need
 More breadth of culture. Is not Ida
 right? ¹⁸⁰
 They worth it? truer to the law within?
 Severer in the logic of a life?
 Twice as magnetic to sweet influences
 Of earth and heaven? and she of whom
 you speak,
 My mother, looks as whole as some
 serene
 Creation minted in the golden moods
 Of sovereign artists; not a thought, a
 touch,
 But pure as lines of green that streak
 the white
 Of the first snowdrop's inner leaves; I
 say,
 Not like the piebald miscellany, man,
 Bursts of great heart and slips in sen-
 sual mire, ¹⁹¹
 But whole and one; and take them all-
 in-all,
 Were we ourselves but half as good,
 as kind,
 As truthful, much that Ida claims as
 right
 Had ne'er been mooted, but as frankly
 theirs
 As dues of Nature. To our point; not
 war,
 Lest I lose all.'
 'Nay, nay, you spake but sense,'
 Said Gama. 'We remember love our-
 self
 In our sweet youth; we did not rate
 him then
 This red-hot iron to be shaped with
 blows. ²⁰⁰
 You talk almost like Ida; *she* can talk;
 And there is something in it as you say:
 But you talk kindlier; we esteem you
 for it.—
 He seems a gracious and a gallant
 Prince,
 I would he had our daughter. For the
 rest,
 Our own detention, why, the causes
 weigh'd,

Fatherly fears—you used us cour-
 teously—
 We would do much to gratify your
 Prince—
 We pardon it; and for your ingress
 here
 Upon the skirt and fringe of our fair
 land, ²¹⁰
 You did but come as goblins in the
 night,
 Nor in the furrow broke the plough
 man's head,
 Nor burnt the grange, nor buss'd the
 milking-maid,
 Nor robb'd the farmer of his bowl of
 cream.
 But let your Prince—our royal word
 upon it,
 He comes back safe—ride with us to
 our lines,
 And speak with Arac. Arac's word is
 thrice
 As ours with Ida; something may be
 done—
 I know not what—and ours shall see
 us friends.
 You, likewise, our late guests, if so
 you will, ²²⁰
 Follow us. Who knows? we four may
 build some plan
 Foursquare to opposition.'
 Here he reach'd
 White hands of farewell to my sire,
 who growl'd
 An answer which, half-muffled in his
 beard,
 Let so much out as gave us leave to go.
 Then rode we with the old king
 across the lawns
 Beneath huge trees, a thousand rings
 of Spring
 In every bole, a song on every spray
 Of birds that piped their Valentines,
 and woke
 Desire in me to infuse my tale of love
 In the old king's ears, who promised
 help, and oozed ²³¹
 All o'er with honey'd answer as we
 rode;
 And blossom-fragrant slept the heavy
 dews
 Gather'd by night and peace, with
 each light air
 On our mail'd heads. But other
 thoughts than peace

Burnt in us, when we saw the embat-
tled squares
And squadrons of the Prince, tramping the flowers
With clamor; for among them rose a cry
As if to greet the king; they made a halt;
The horses yell'd; they clash'd their arms; the drum ²⁴⁰
Beat; merrily-blowing shrill'd the martial fife;
And in the blast and bray of the long horn
And serpent-throated bugle, undulated
The banner. Anon to meet us lightly pranced
Three captains out; nor ever had I seen
Such thews of men. The midmost and the highest
Was Arac; all about his motion clung
The shadow of his sister, as the beam
Of the East, that play'd upon them, made them glance
Like those three stars of the airy Giant's zone, ²⁵⁰
That glitter burnish'd by the frosty dark;
And as the fiery Sirius alters hue,
And bickers into red and emerald, shone
Their morions, wash'd with morning, as they came.

And I that prated peace, when first I heard
War-music, felt the blind wild-beast of force,
Whose home is in the sinews of a man,
Stir in me as to strike. Then took the king
His three broad sons; with now a wandering hand
And now a pointed finger, told them all. ²⁶⁰
A common light of smiles at our disguise
Broke from their lips, and, ere the windy jest
Had labor'd down within his ample lungs,
The genial giant, Arac, roll'd himself
Thro' in the saddle, then burst out in words:

'Our land invaded, 'sdeath! and he himself
Your captive, yet my father wills not war!
And, 'sdeath! myself, what care I, war or no?
But then this question of your troth remains;
And there's a downright honest meaning in her. ²⁷⁰
She flies too high, she flies too high! and yet
She ask'd but space and fair-play for her scheme;
She prest and prest it on me — I myself,
What know I of these things? but, life and soul!
I thought her half-right talking of her wrongs;
I say she flies too high, 'sdeath! what of that?
I take her for the flower of womankind,
And so I often told her, right or wrong;
And, Prince, she can be sweet to those she loves,
And, right or wrong, I care not; this is all, ²⁸⁰
I stand upon her side; she made me swear it —
'Sdeath! — and with solemn rites by candle-light —
Swear by Saint something — I forget her name —
Her that talk'd down the fifty wisest men;
She was a princess too; and so I swore.
Come, this is all; she will not; waive your claim.
If not, the foughten field, what else, at once
Decides it, 'sdeath! against my father's will.'

I lagg'd in answer, loth to render up
My precontract, and loth by brainless war ²⁹⁰
To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet;
Till one of those two brothers, half aside
And fingering at the hair about his lip,
To prick us on to combat, 'Like to like!
The woman's garment hid the woman's heart.'
A taunt that clench'd his purpose like a blow!

For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-
scoff,
And sharp I answer'd, touch'd upon
the point
Where idle boys are cowards to their
shame,
'Decide it here; why not? we are three
to three.' 300

Then spake the third: 'But three
to three? no more?
No more, and in our noble sister's
cause?
More, more, for honor! every captain
waits
Hungry for honor, angry for his king.
More, more, some fifty on a side, that
each
May breathe himself, and quick! by
overthrow
Of these or those, the question settled
die.'

'Yea,' answer'd I, 'for this wild
wreath of air,
This flake of rainbow flying on the
highest
Foam of men's deeds—this honor, if
ye will. 310
It needs must be for honor if at all;
Since, what decision? if we fail we
fail,
And if we win we fail; she would not
keep
Her compact.' 'Sdeath! but we will
send to her,'
Said Arac, 'worthy reasons why she
should
Bide by this issue; let our missive
thro',
And you shall have her answer by the
word.'

'Boys!' shriek'd the old king, but
vainlier than a hen
To her false daughters in the pool;
for none
Regarded; neither seem'd there more
to say. 320
Back rode we to my father's camp,
and found
He thrice had sent a herald to the
gates,
To learn if Ida yet would cede our
claim,
Or by denial flush her babbling wells

With her own people's life; three
times he went.

The first, he blew and blew, but none
appear'd;

He batter'd at the doors, none came;
the next,

An awful voice within had warn'd
him thence;

The third, and those eight daughters
of the plough

Came sallying thro' the gates, and
caught his hair, 330

And so belabor'd him on rib and cheek
They made him wild. Not less one
glance he caught

Thro' open doors of Ida station'd there
Unshaken, clinging to her purpose,
firm

Tho' compass'd by two armies and
the noise

Of arms; and standing like a stately
pine

Set in a cataract on an island-crag,
When storm is on the heights, and
right and left

Suck'd from the dark heart of the
long hills roll

The torrents, dash'd to the vale; and
yet her will 340

Bred will in me to overcome it or fall.

But when I told the king that I
was pledged

To fight in tourney for my bride, he
clash'd

His iron palms together with a cry;
Himself would tilt it out among the
lads;

But overborne by all his bearded lords
With reasons drawn from age and
state, perforce

He yielded, wroth and red, with fierce
demur;

And many a bold knight started up
in heat,

And sware to combat for my claim
till death. 350

All on this side the palace ran the
field

Flat to the garden-wall; and likewise
here,

Above the garden's glowing blossom-
belts,

A column'd entry shone and marble
stairs,

And great bronze valves, emboss'd
with Tomyris

And what she did to Cyrus after fight,
But now fast barr'd. So here upon
the flat

All that long morn the lists were
hammer'd up,

And all that morn the heralds to and
fro,

With message and defiance, went and
came; 360

Last, Ida's answer, in a royal hand,
But shaken here and there, and roll-
ing words

Oration-like. I kiss'd it and I read:

'O brother, you have known the
pangs we felt,

What heats of indignation when we
heard

Of those that iron-cramp'd their wo-
men's feet;

Of lands in which at the altar the
poor bride

Gives her harsh groom for bridal-gift
a scourge;

Of living hearts that crack within the
fire

Where smoulder their dead despots;
and of those, — 370

Mothers, — that, all prophetic pity,
fling

Their pretty maids in the running
flood, and swoops

The vulture, beak and talon, at the
heart

Made for all noble motion. And I saw
That equal baseness lived in sleeker
times

With smoother men; the old leaven
leaven'd all;

Millions of throats would bawl for
civil rights,

No woman named; therefore I set my
face

Against all men, and lived but for
mine own.

Far off from men I built a fold for
them; 380

I stored it full of rich memorial;
I fenced it round with gallant insti-
tutes,

And biting laws to scare the beasts of
prey,

And prosper'd, till a rout of saucy
boys

Brake on us at our books, and marr'd
our peace,

Mask'd like our maids, blustering I
know not what

Of insolence and love, some pretext
held

Of baby troth, invalid, since my will
Seal'd not the bond — the striplings!

— for their sport! —

I tamed my leopards; shall I not tame
these? 390

Or you? or I? for since you think me
touch'd

In honor — what! I would not aught
of false —

Is not our cause pure? and whereas I
know

Your prowess, Arac, and what mo-
ther's blood

You draw from, fight! You failing,
I abide

What end soever; fail you will not.
Still,

Take not his life, he risk'd it for my
own;

His mother lives. Yet whatsoe'er you
do,

Fight and fight well; strike and strike
home. O dear

Brothers, the woman's angel guards
you, you 400

The sole men to be mingled with our
cause,

The sole men we shall prize in the
after-time,

Your very armor hallow'd, and your
statues

Rear'd, sung to, when, this gadfly
brush'd aside,

We plant a solid foot into the Time,
And mould a generation strong to
move

With claim on claim from right to
right, till she

Whose name is yoked with children's
know herself;

And Knowledge in our own land
make her free,

And, ever following those two crowned
twins, 410

Commerce and Conquest, shower the
fiery grain

Of freedom broadcast over all that
orbs

Between the Northern and the South
ern morn.'

Then came a postscript dash'd across
 the rest :
 'See that there be no traitors in your
 camp.
 We seem a nest of traitors—none to
 trust
 Since our arms fail'd—this Egypt-
 plague of men!
 Almost our maids were better at their
 homes,
 Than thus man-girdled here. Indeed
 I think
 Our chiefest comfort is the little child
 Of one unworthy mother, which she
 left.
 She shall not have it back; the child⁴²¹
 shall grow
 To prize the authentic mother of her
 mind.
 I took it for an hour in mine own bed
 This morning; there the tender orphan
 hands
 Felt at my heart, and seem'd to charm
 from thence
 The wrath I nursed against the world.
 Farewell.'

I ceased; he said, 'Stubborn, but
 she may sit
 Upon a king's right hand in thunder-
 storms,
 And breed up warriors! See now,
 tho' yourself⁴³⁰
 Be dazzled by the wildfire Love to
 sloughs
 That swallow common sense, the
 spindling king,
 This Gama swamp'd in lazy tolerance.
 When the man wants weight, the wo-
 man takes it up,
 And topples down the scales; but
 this is fixt
 As are the roots of earth and base of
 all, —
 Man for the field and woman for the
 hearth;
 Man for the sword, and for the needle
 she;
 Man with the head, and woman with
 the heart;
 Man to command, and woman to
 obey;⁴⁴⁰
 All else confusion. Look you! the
 gray mare
 Is ill to live with, when her whinny
 shrills

From tile to scullery, and her small
 goodman
 Shrinks in his arm-chair while the
 fires of hell
 Mix with his hearth. But you—she's
 yet a colt—
 Take, break her; strongly groom'd
 and straitly curb'd
 She might not rank with those detest-
 able
 That let the bantling scald at home,
 and brawl
 Their rights or wrongs like potherbs
 in the street.
 They say she's comely; there's the
 fairer chance.⁴⁵⁰
 I like her none the less for rating at
 her!
 Besides, the woman wed is not as we,
 But suffers change of frame. A lusty
 brace
 Of twins may weed her of her folly.
 Boy,
 The bearing and the training of a child
 Is woman's wisdom.'
 Thus the hard old king,
 I took my leave, for it was nearly
 noon;
 I pored upon her letter which I held,
 And on the little clause, 'take not his
 life;'
 I mused on that wild morning in the
 woods,⁴⁶⁰
 And on the 'Follow, follow, thou
 shalt win;'
 I thought on all the wrathful king
 had said,
 And how the strange betrothment
 was to end.
 Then I remember'd that burnt sor-
 cerer's curse
 That one should fight with shadows
 and should fall;
 And like a flash the weird affection
 came.
 King, camp, and college turn'd to hol-
 low shows;
 I seem'd to move in old memorial tilts,
 And doing battle with forgotten
 ghosts,
 To dream myself the shadow of a
 dream;⁴⁷⁰
 And ere I woke it was the point of
 noon,
 The lists were ready. Empanoplied
 and plumed

We enter'd in, and waited, fifty there
 Opposed to fifty, till the trumpet
 blared
 At the barrier like a wild horn in a
 land
 Of echoes, and a moment, and once
 more
 The trumpet, and again; at which the
 storm
 Of galloping hoofs bare on the ridge
 of spears
 And riders front to front, until they
 closed
 In conflict with the crash of shivering
 points, ⁴⁸⁰
 And thunder. Yet it seem'd a dream,
 I dream'd
 Of fighting. On his haunches rose the
 steed,
 And into fiery splinters leapt the lance,
 And out of stricken helmets sprang the
 fire.
 Part sat like rocks; part reel'd but
 kept their seats;
 Part roll'd on the earth and rose again
 and drew;
 Part stumbled mixt with floundering
 horses. Down
 From those two bulks at Arac's side,
 and down
 From Arac's arm, as from a giant's
 flail,
 The large blows rain'd, as here and
 everywhere ⁴⁹⁰
 He rode the mellay, lord of the ringing
 lists,
 And all the plain — brand, mace, and
 shaft, and shield —
 Shock'd, like an iron-clanging anvil
 bang'd
 With hammers; till I thought, can
 this be he
 From Gama's dwarfish loins? if this
 be so,
 The mother makes us most — and in
 my dream
 I glanced aside, and saw the palace-
 front
 Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies'
 eyes,
 And highest, among the statues,
 statue-like,
 Between a cymbal'd Miriam and a Jael,
 With Psyche's babe, was Ida watch-
 ing us, ⁵⁰¹
 A single band of gold about her hair,

Like a saint's glory up in heaven; but
 she,
 No saint — inexorable — no tender-
 ness —
 Too hard, too cruel. Yet she sees me
 fight,
 Yea, let her see me fall. With that I
 drave
 Among the thickest and bore down a
 prince,
 And Cyril one. Yea, let me make my
 dream
 All that I would. But that large-
 moulded man,
 His visage all agrin as at a wake, ⁵¹⁰
 Made at me thro' the press, and, stag-
 gering back
 With stroke on stroke the horse and
 horseman, came
 As comes a pillar of electric cloud,
 Flaying the roofs and sucking up the
 drains,
 And shadowing down the champaign
 till it strikes
 On a wood, and takes, and breaks, and
 cracks, and splits,
 And twists the grain with such a roar
 that Earth
 Reels, and the herdsman cry; for every-
 thing
 Gave way before him. Only Florian,
 he
 That loved me closer than his own
 right eye, ⁵²⁰
 Thrust in between; but Arac rode him
 down.
 And Cyril seeing it, push'd against the
 Prince,
 With Psyche's color round his helmet,
 tough,
 Strong, supple, sinew-corded, apt at
 arms;
 But tougher, heavier, stronger, he that
 smote
 And threw him. Last I spurr'd; I
 felt my veins
 Stretch with fierce heat; a moment
 hand to hand,
 And sword to sword, and horse to
 horse we hung,
 Till I struck out and shouted; the blade
 glanced,
 I did but shear a feather, and dream
 and truth ⁵³⁰
 Flow'd from me; darkness closed me,
 and I fell.

Home they brought her warrior dead;
 She nor swoon'd nor utter'd cry.
 All her maidens, watching, said,
 'She must weep or she will die.'

Then they praised him, soft and low,
 Call'd him worthy to be loved,
 Truest friend and noblest foe;
 Yet she neither spoke nor moved.

Stole a maiden from her place,
 Lightly to the warrior slept,
 Took the face-cloth from the face;
 Yet she neither moved nor wept.

540

Rose a nurse of ninety years,
 Set his child upon her knee —
 Like summer tempest came her tears —
 'Sweet my child, I live for thee.'

VI

My dream had never died or lived
 again;
 As in some mystic middle state I lay
 Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard
 Tho', if I saw not, yet they told me all
 So often that I speak as having seen.



'Like summer tempest came her tears —
 "Sweet my child, I live for thee"'

For so it seem'd, or so they said to
me,
That all things grew more tragic and
more strange;
That when our side was vanquish'd and
my cause
For ever lost, there went up a great
cry,
'The Prince is slain!' My father heard
and ran¹⁰
In on the lists, and there unlaced my
casque
And grovell'd on my body, and after
him
Came Psyche, sorrowing for Aglaia.

But high upon the palace Ida stood
With Psyche's babe in arm; there on
the roofs
Like that great dame of Lapidoth she
sang.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen:
the seed,
The little seed they laugh'd at in the dark,
Has risen and cleft the soil, and grown a
bulk
Of spanless girth, that lays on every side²⁰
A thousand arms and rushes to the sun.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen
they came;
The leaves were wet with women's tears;
they heard
A noise of songs they would not understand;
They mark'd it with the red cross to the fall,
And would have strown it, and are fallen
themselves.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen:
they came,
The woodmen with their axes: lo the tree!
But we will make it faggots for the hearth,
And shape it plank and beam for roof and
floor,³⁰
And boats and bridges for the use of men.

'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen;
they struck;
With their own blows they hurt themselves,
nor knew
There dwelt an iron nature in the grain;
The glittering axe was broken in their arms,
Their arms were shatter'd to the shoulder
blade.

'Our enemies have fallen, but this shall
grow
A night of Summer from the heat, a breadth
Of Autumn, dropping fruits of power; and
roll'd

With music in the growing breeze of Time,
The tops shall strike from star to star, the
fangs
Shall move the stony bases of the world.⁴¹

'And now, O maids, behold our
sanctuary
Is violate, our laws broken; fear we not
To break them more in their behoof,
whose arms
Champion'd our cause and won it with
a day
Blanch'd in our annals, and perpetual
feast,
When dames and heroines of the
golden year
Shall strip a hundred hollows bare of
Spring,
To rain an April of ovation round⁵⁰
Their statues, borne aloft, the three;
but come,
We will be liberal, since our rights are
won.
Let them not lie in the tents with
coarse mankind,
Ill nurses; but descend, and proffer
these
The brethren of our blood and cause,
that there
Lie bruised and maim'd, the tender
ministries
Of female hands and hospitality.'

She spoke, and with the babe yet in
her arms,
Descending, burst the great bronze
valves, and led
A hundred maids in train across the
park.⁶⁰
Some cowl'd, and some bare-headed,
on they came,
Their feet in flowers, her loveliest.
By them went
The enamor'd air sighing, and on their
curls
From the high tree the blossom wav-
ering fell,
And over them the tremulous isles of
light
Slided, they moving under shade; but
Blanche
At distance follow'd. So they came:
anon
Thro' open field into the lists they
wound
Timorously; and as the leader of the
herd

That holds a stately fretwork to the
 sun, ⁷⁰
 And follow'd up by a hundred airy
 does,
 Steps with a tender foot, light as on
 air,
 The lovely, lordly creature floated on
 To where her wounded brethren lay;
 there stay'd,
 Knelt on one knee, — the child on one,
 — and prest
 Their hands, and call'd them dear de-
 liverers,
 And happy warriors, and immortal
 names,
 And said, 'You shall not lie in the
 tents, but here,
 And nursed by those for whom you
 fought, and served
 With female hands and hospitality.' ⁸⁰

Then, whether moved by this, or
 was it chance,
 She past my way. Up started from
 my side
 The old lion, glaring with his whelp-
 less eye,
 Silent; but when she saw me lying
 stark,
 Dishelm'd and mute, and motionlessly
 pale,
 Cold even to her, she sigh'd; and
 when she saw
 The haggard father's face and rever-
 end beard
 Of grisly twine, all dabbled with the
 blood
 Of his own son, shudder'd, a twitch of
 pain
 Tortured her mouth, and o'er her
 forehead past ⁹⁰
 A shadow, and her hue changed, and
 she said:
 'He saved my life; my brother slew
 him for it.'
 No more; at which the king in bitter
 scorn
 Drew from my neck the painting and
 the tress,
 And held them up. She saw them,
 and a day
 Rose from the distance on her memory,
 When the good queen, her mother,
 shore the tress
 With kisses, ere the days of Lady
 Blanche.

And then once more she look'd at my
 pale face; ⁹⁹
 Till understanding all the foolish work
 Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,
 Her iron will was broken in her mind;
 Her noble heart was molten in her
 breast;
 She bow'd, she set the child on the
 earth; she laid
 A feeling finger on my brows, and
 presently
 'O Sire,' she said, 'he lives; he is
 not dead!
 O, let me have him with my brethren
 here
 In our own palace; we will tend on
 him
 Like one of these; if so, by any
 means,
 To lighten this great clog of thanks,
 that make ¹¹⁰
 Our progress falter to the woman's
 goal.'

She said; but at the happy word
 'he lives!'
 My father stoop'd, re-father'd o'er my
 wounds.
 So those two foes above my fallen
 life,
 With brow to brow like night and
 evening mixt
 Their dark and gray, while Psyche
 ever stole
 A little nearer, till the babe that by
 us,
 Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden
 brede,
 Lay like a new-fallen meteor on the
 grass,
 Uncared for, spied its mother and
 began ¹²⁰
 A blind and babbling laughter, and to
 dance
 Its body, and reach its fatling inno-
 cent arms
 And lazy lingering fingers. She the
 appeal
 Brook'd not, but clamoring out 'Mine
 — mine — not yours!
 It is not yours, but mine; give me the
 child!'
 Ceased all on tremble; piteous was
 the cry.
 So stood the unhappy mother open-
 mouth'd,

And turn'd each face her way. Wan
 was her cheek
 With hollow watch, her blooming
 mantle torn,
 Red grief and mother's hunger in her
 eye, ¹³⁰
 And down dead-heavy sank her curls,
 and half
 The sacred mother's bosom, panting,
 burst
 The laces toward her babe; but she
 nor cared
 Nor knew it, clamoring on, till Ida
 heard,
 Look'd up, and rising slowly from me,
 stood
 Erect and silent, striking with her
 glance
 The mother, me, the child. But he
 that lay
 Beside us, Cyril, batter'd as he was,
 Trail'd himself up on one knee; then
 he drew
 Her robe to meet his lips, and down
 she look'd ¹⁴⁰
 At the arm'd man sideways, pitying
 as it seem'd,
 Or self-involved; but when she learnt
 his face,
 Remembering his ill-omen'd song,
 arose
 Once more thro' all her height, and
 o'er him grew
 Tall as a figure lengthen'd on the sand
 When the tide ebbs in sunshine, and
 he said:

'O fair and strong and terrible!
 Lioness
 That with your long locks play the
 lion's mane!
 But Love and Nature, these are two
 more terrible
 And stronger. See, your foot is on
 our necks, ¹⁵⁰
 We vanquish'd, you the victor of your
 will.
 What would you more? give her the
 child! remain
 Orb'd in your isolation; he is dead,
 Or all as dead: henceforth we let you
 be.
 Win you the hearts of women; and
 beware
 Lest, where you seek the common
 love of these,

The common hate with the revolving
 wheel
 Should drag you down, and some
 great Nemesis
 Break from a darken'd future, crown'd
 with fire,
 And tread you out for ever. But
 howsoe'er ¹⁶⁰
 Fixt in yourself, never in your own
 arms
 To hold your own, deny not hers to
 her,
 Give her the child! O, if, I say, you
 keep
 One pulse that beats true woman, if
 you loved
 The breast that fed or arm that dan-
 dled you,
 Or own one port of sense not flint to
 prayer,
 Give her the child! or if you scorn to
 lay it,
 Yourself, in hands so lately claspt
 with yours,
 Or speak to her, your dearest, her one
 fault
 The tenderness, not yours, that could
 not kill, ¹⁷⁰
 Give *me* it; *I* will give it her.' ^{He said.}
 At first her eye with slow dilation
 roll'd
 Dry flame, she listening; after sank
 and sank
 And, into mournful twilight mellow-
 ing, dwelt
 Full on the child. She took it.
 'Pretty bud!
 Lily of the vale! half-open'd bell of
 the woods!
 Sole comfort of my dark hour, when
 a world
 Of traitorous friend and broken system
 made
 No purple in the distance, mystery,
 Pledge of a love not to be mine, fare-
 well! ¹⁸⁰
 These men are hard upon us as of old,
 We two must part; and yet how fair
 was I
 To dream thy cause embraced in mine,
 to think
 I might be something to thee, when I
 felt
 Thy helpless warmth about my barren
 breast



'Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot,
And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close enough'

In the dead prime; but may thy mother prove
As true to thee as false, false, false to me!
And, if thou needs must bear the yoke, I wish it
Gentle as freedom' — here she kiss'd it; then —
'All good go with thee! take it, sir,'
and so ¹⁹⁰
Laid the soft babe in his hard-mailed hands,
Who turn'd half-round to Psyche as she sprang
To meet it, with an eye that swum in thanks;
Then felt it sound and whole from head to foot,
And hugg'd and never hugg'd it close enough,
And in her hunger mouth'd and mumbled it,

And hid her bosom with it; after that
Put on more calm and added suppliantly:

'We two were friends: I go to mine own land
For ever. Find some other; as for me ²⁰⁰
I scarce am fit for your great plans:
yet speak to me,
Say one soft word and let me part forgiven.'

But Ida spoke not, rapt upon the child.
Then Arac: 'Ida — 'sdeath! you blame the man;
You wrong yourselves — the woman is so hard
Upon the woman. Come, a grace to me!

I am your warrior; I and mine have
fought
Your battle. Kiss her; take her hand,
she weeps.
'Sdeath! I would sooner fight thrice
o'er than see it.'

But Ida spoke not, gazing on the
ground.²¹⁰
And reddening in the furrows of his
chin,
And moved beyond his custom, Gama
said:

'I've heard that there is iron in the
blood,
And I believe it. Not one word? not
one?

Whence drew you this steel temper?
not from me,
Not from your mother, now a saint
with saints.

She said you had a heart—I heard
her say it—

"Our Ida has a heart"—just ere she
died—

"But see that some one with authority
Be near her still;" and I—I sought
for one—²²⁰

All people said she had authority—
The Lady Blanche—much profit!
Not one word;

No! tho' your father sues. See how
you stand

Stiff as Lot's wife, and all the good
knights maim'd,

I trust that there is no one hurt to
death,

For your wild whim. And was it then
for this,

Was it for this we gave our palace
up,

Where we withdrew from summer
heats and state,

And had our wine and chess beneath
the planes,

And many a pleasant hour with her
that's gone,²³⁰

Ere you were born to vex us? Is it
kind?

Speak to her, I say; is this not she of
whom,

When first she came, all flush'd you
said to me,

Now had you got a friend of your
own age,

Now could you share your thought,
now should men see

Two women faster welded in one
love

Than pairs of wedlock? she you walk'd
with, she

You talk'd with, whole nights long,
up in the tower,

Of sine and arc, spheroid and azi-
muth,

And right ascension, heaven knows
what; and now²⁴⁰

A word, but one, one little kindly
word,

Not one to spare her! Out upon you,
flint!

You love nor her, nor me, nor any;
nay,

You shame your mother's judgment
too. Not one?

You will not? well—no heart have
you, or such

As fancies like the vermin in a nut
Have fretted all to dust and bitter-
ness.'

So said the small king moved beyond
his wout.

But Ida stood nor spoke, drain'd of
her force

By many a varying influence and so
long.²⁵⁰

Down thro' her limbs a drooping
languor wept;

Her head a little bent; and on her
mouth

A doubtful smile dwelt like a clouded
moon

In a still water. Then brake out my
sire,

Lifting his grim head from my
wounds: 'O you,

Woman, whom we thought woman
even now,

And were half fool'd to let you tend
our son,

Because he might have wish'd it—but
we see

The accomplice of your madness un-
forgiven,

And think that you might mix his
draught with death,²⁶⁰

When your skies change again; the
rougher hand

Is safer. On to the tents; take up the
Prince.'

He rose, and while each ear was
 prick'd to attend
 A tempest, thro' the cloud that dimm'd
 her broke
 A genial warmth and light once more,
 and shone
 Thro' glittering drops on her sad friend.
 'Come hither,
 O Psyche,' she cried out, 'embrace
 me, come,
 Quick while I melt; make reconcile-
 ment sure
 With one that cannot keep her mind
 an hour;
 Come to the hollow heart they slander
 so!
 Kiss and be friends, like children being
 chid!
 I seem no more, I want forgiveness
 too;
 I should have had to do with none
 but maids,
 That have no links with men. Ah
 false but dear,
 Dear traitor, too much loved, why? —
 why? — yet see
 Before these kings we embrace you yet
 once more
 With all forgiveness, all oblivion,
 And trust, not love, you less.
 And now, O Sire,
 Grant me your son, to nurse, to wait
 upon him,
 Like mine own brother. For my debt
 to him,
 This nightmare weight of gratitude, I
 know it.
 Taunt me no more; yourself and yours
 shall have
 Free adit; we will scatter all our
 maids
 Till happier times each to her proper
 hearth.
 What use to keep them here — now?
 grant my prayer.
 Help, father, brother, help; speak to
 the king;
 Thaw this male nature to some touch
 of that
 Which kills me with myself, and
 drags me down
 From my fixt height to mob me up
 with all
 The soft and milky rabble of woman-
 kind,
 Poor weakling even as they are.'

Passionate tears
 Follow'd; the king replied not; Cyril
 said:
 'Your brother, lady, — Florian, — ask
 for him
 Of your great Head — for he is
 wounded too —
 That you may tend upon him with the
 Prince.'
 'Ay, so,' said Ida with a bitter smile,
 'Our laws are broken; let him enter
 too.'
 Then Violet, she that sang the mourn-
 ful song,
 And had a cousin tumbled on the plain,
 Petition'd too for him. 'Ay, so,' she
 said,
 'I stagger in the stream; I cannot keep
 My heart an eddy from the brawling
 hour.
 We break our laws with ease, but let
 it be.'
 'Ay, so?' said Blanche: 'Amazed am
 I to hear
 Your Highness; but your Highness
 breaks with ease
 The law your Highness did not make;
 't was I.
 I had been wedded wife, I knew man-
 kind,
 And block'd them out; but these men
 came to woo
 Your Highness, — verily I think to
 win.'
 So she, and turn'd askance a wintry
 eye;
 But Ida, with a voice that, like a bell
 Toll'd by an earthquake in a trembling
 tower,
 Rang ruin, answer'd full of grief and
 scorn:
 'Fling our doors wide! all, all, not
 one, but all,
 Not only he, but by my mother's soul,
 Whatever man lies wounded, friend or
 foe,
 Shall enter, if he will! Let our girls
 flit,
 Till the storm die! but had you stood
 by us,
 The roar that breaks the Pharos from
 his base
 Had left us rock. She fain would sting
 us too,

But shall not. Pass, and mingle with
your likes.
We brook no further insult, but are
gone.'

She turn'd; the very nape of her
white neck
Was rosed with indignation; but the
Prince
Her brother came; the king her father
charm'd
Her wounded soul with words; nor
did mine own
Refuse her proffer, lastly gave his
hand.

Then us they lifted up, dead
weights, and bare
Straight to the doors; to them the
doors gave way
Groaning, and in the vestal entry
shriek'd 330
The virgin marble under iron heels.
And on they moved and gain'd the
hall, and there
Rest'd; but great the crush was, and
each base,
To left and right, of those tall col-
umns drown'd
In silken fluctuation and the swarm
Of female whisperers. At the further
end
Was Ida by the throne, the two great
cats
Close by her, like supporters on a
shield,
Bow-back'd with fear; but in the
centre stood
The common men with rolling eyes;
amazed 340
They glared upon the women, and
aghast
The women stared at these, all silent,
save
When armor clash'd or jingled, while
the day,
Descending, struck athwart the hall,
and shot
A flying splendor out of brass and
steel,
That o'er the statues leapt from head
to head,
Now fired an angry Pallas on the helm,
Now set a wrathful Dian's moon on
flame;
And now and then an echo started up,

And shuddering fled from room to
room, and died 350
Of fright in far apartments.

Then the voice
Of Ida sounded, issuing ordinance;
And me they bore up the broad stairs,
and thro'
The long-laid galleries past a hundred
doors
To one deep chamber shut from sound,
and due
To languid limbs and sickness, left
me in it;
And others elsewhere they laid; and
all
That afternoon a sound arose of hoof
And chariot, many a maiden passing
home
Till happier times; but some were
left of those 360
Held sagest, and the great lords out
and in,
From those two hosts that lay beside
the wall,
Walk'd at their will, and everything
was changed.

Ask me no more: the moon may draw the
sea;
The cloud may stoop from heaven and
take the shape,
With fold to fold, of mountain or of cape;
But O too fond, when have I answer'd thee?
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: what answer should I
give?
I love not hollow cheek or faded eye: 370
Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!
Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;
Ask me no more.

Ask me no more: thy fate and mine are
seal'd;
I strove against the stream and all in vain;
Let the great river take me to the main.
No more, dear love, for at a touch I yield;
Ask me no more.

VII

So was their sanctuary violated,
So their fair college turn'd to hospital,
At first with all confusion; by and by
Sweet order lived again with other
laws,
A kindlier influence reign'd, and
everywhere

Low voices with the ministering hand
 Hung round the sick. The maidens
 came, they talk'd,
 They sang, they read; till she not fair
 began
 To gather light, and she that was be-
 came
 Her former beauty treble; and to and
 fro
 With books, with flowers, with angel
 offices,
 Like creatures native unto gracious
 act,
 And in their own clear element, they
 moved.

But sadness on the soul of Ida fell,
 And hatred of her weakness, blent
 with shame.
 Old studies fail'd; seldom she spoke;
 but oft
 Clomb to the roofs, and gazed alone
 for hours
 On that disastrous leaguer, swarms of
 men
 Darkening her female field. Void
 was her use,
 And she as one that climbs a peak to
 gaze
 O'er land and main, and sees a great
 black cloud
 Drag inward from the deeps, a wall
 of night,
 Blot out the slope of sea from verge
 to shore,
 And suck the blinding splendor from
 the sand,
 And quenching lake by lake and tarn
 by tarn
 Expunge the world; so fared she gaz-
 ing there,
 So blacken'd all her world in secret,
 blank
 And waste it seem'd and vain; till
 down she came,
 And found fair peace once more among
 the sick.

And twilight dawn'd; and morn by
 morn the lark
 Shot up and shrill'd in flickering gyres,
 but I
 Lay silent in the muffled cage of
 life.
 And twilight gloom'd, and broader-
 grown the bowers

Drew the great night into themselves,
 and heaven,
 Star after star, arose and fell; but I,
 Deeper than those weird doubts could
 reach me, lay
 Quite sunder'd from the moving Uni-
 verse,
 Nor knew what eye was on me, nor
 the hand
 That nursed me, more than infants in
 their sleep.

But Psyche tended Florian; with
 her oft
 Melissa came, for Blanche had gone,
 but left
 Her child among us, willing she should
 keep
 Court-favor. Here and there the small
 bright head,
 A light of healing, glanced about the
 couch,
 Or thro' the parted silks the tender
 face
 Peep'd, shining in upon the wounded
 man
 With blush and smile, a medicine in
 themselves
 To wile the length from languorous
 hours, and draw
 The sting from pain; nor seem'd it
 strange that soon
 He rose up whole, and those fair char-
 ities
 Join'd at her side; nor stranger seem'd
 that hearts
 So gentle, so employ'd, should close
 in love,
 Than when two dewdrops on the
 petal shake
 To the same sweet air, and tremble
 deeper down,
 And slip at once all-fragrant into one.

Less prosperously the second suit
 obtain'd
 At first with Psyche. Not tho' Blanche
 had sworn
 That after that dark night among the
 fields
 She needs must wed him for her own
 good name;
 Not tho' he built upon the babe re-
 stored;
 Not tho' she liked him, yielded she,
 but fear'd

To incense the Head once more; till
 on a day
 When Cyril pleaded, Ida came behind
 Seen but of Psyche; on her foot she
 hung
 A moment, and she heard, at which
 her face
 A little flush'd, and she past on; but
 each
 Assumed from thence a half-consent
 involved
 In stillness, plighted troth, and were
 at peace.

Nor only these; Love in the sacred
 halls
 Held carnival at will, and flying
 struck 70
 With showers of random sweet on
 maid and man.
 Nor did her father cease to press my
 claim,
 Nor did mine own now reconciled;
 nor yet
 Did those twin brothers, risen again
 and whole;
 Nor Arac, satiate with his victory.

But I lay still, and with me oft she
 sat.
 Then came a change; for sometimes I
 would catch
 Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it
 hard,
 And fling it like a viper off, and shriek,
 'You are not Ida;' clasp it once again,
 And call her Ida, tho' I knew her not,
 And call her sweet, as if in irony, 82
 And call her hard and cold, which
 seem'd a truth;
 And still she fear'd that I should lose
 my mind,
 And often she believed that I should
 die;
 Till out of long frustration of her
 care,
 And pensive tendance in the all-weary
 noons,
 And watches in the dead, the dark,
 when clocks
 Throb'd thunder thro' the palace
 floors, or call'd
 On flying Time from all their silver
 tongues — 90
 And out of memories of her kindlier
 days,

And sidelong glances at my father's
 grief,
 And at the happy lovers heart in
 heart —
 And out of hauntings of my spoken
 love,
 And lonely listenings to my mutter'd
 dream,
 And often feeling of the helpless hands,
 And wordless broodings on the wasted
 cheek —
 From all a closer interest flourish'd up,
 Tenderness touch by touch, and last,
 to these,
 Love, like an Alpine harebell hung
 with tears 100
 By some cold morning glacier; frail at
 first
 And feeble, all unconscious of itself,
 But such as gather'd color day by day.

Last I woke sane, but well-nigh close
 to death
 For weakness. It was evening; silent
 light
 Slept on the painted walls, wherein
 were wrought
 Two grand designs; for on one side
 arose
 The women up in wild revolt, and
 storm'd
 At the Oppian law. Titanic shapes,
 they cramm'd
 The forum, and half-crush'd among
 the rest 110
 A dwarf-like Cato cower'd. On the
 other side
 Hortensia spoke against the tax; be-
 hind,
 A train of dames. By axe and eagle
 sat,
 With all their foreheads drawn in
 Roman scowls,
 And half the wolf's-milk curdled in
 their veins,
 The fierce triumphs; and before them
 paused
 Hortensia, pleading; angry was her
 face.

I saw the forms; I knew not where
 I was.
 They did but look like hollow shows;
 nor more
 Sweet Ida. Palm to palm she sat;
 the dew 120

Dwelt in her eyes, and softer all her
 shape
 And rounder seem'd. I moved, I
 sigh'd ; a touch
 Came round my wrist, and tears upon
 my hand.
 Then all for languor and self-pity ran
 Mine down my face, and with what
 life I had,
 And like a flower that cannot all un-
 fold,
 So drench'd it is with tempest, to the
 sun,
 Yet, as it may, turns toward him, I on
 her
 Fixt my faint eyes, and utter'd whis-
 peringly :

'If you be what I think you, some
 sweet dream,

130

I would but ask you to fulfil yourself ;
 But if you be that Ida whom I knew,
 I ask you nothing ; only, if a dream,
 Sweet dream, be perfect. I shall die
 to-night.

Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I
 die.'

I could no more, but lay like one in
 trance,
 That hears his burial talk'd of by his
 friends,
 And cannot speak, nor move, nor make
 one sign,
 But lies and dreads his doom. She
 turn'd, she paused,
 She stoop'd ; and out of languor leapt
 a cry,
 Leapt fiery Passion from the brinks of
 death,

140



“I shall die to-night.
 Stoop down and seem to kiss me ere I die”

And I believed that in the living world
My spirit closed with Ida's at the lips;
Till back I fell, and from mine arms
she rose

Glowing all over noble shame; and all
Her falser self slipt from her like a
robe,

And left her woman, lovelier in her
mood

Than in her mould that other, when
she came

From barren deeps to conquer all with
love,

And down the streaming crystal dropt;
and she ¹⁵⁰

Far-fleeted by the purple island-sides,
Naked, a double light in air and
wave,

To meet her Graces, where they deck'd
her out

For worship without end — nor end of
mine,

Stateliest, for thee! but mute she
glided forth,

Nor glanced behind her, and I sank
and slept,

Fill'd thro' and thro' with love, a
happy sleep.

Deep in the night I woke: she, near
me, held

A volume of the poets of her land.

There to herself, all in low tones, she
read: ¹⁶⁰

'Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the
white;

Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry
font.

The fire-fly wakens; waken thou with me.

'Now droops the milk-white peacock like
a ghost,

And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

'Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the
stars,

And all thy heart lies open unto me.

'Now slides the silent meteor on, and
leaves

A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in
me. ¹⁷⁰

'Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake.

So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
into my bosom and be lost in me.'

I heard her turn the page; she found
a small
Sweet idyl, and once more, as low, she
read:

'Come down, O maid, from yonder
mountain height.

What pleasure lives in height (the shepherd
sang),

In height and cold, the splendor of the
hills?

But cease to move so near the heavens, and
cease ¹⁸⁰

To glide a sunbeam by the blasted pine,
To sit a star upon the sparkling spire;

And come, for Love is of the valley, come,
For Love is of the valley, come thou down

And find him; by the happy threshold, he,
Or hand in hand with Plenty in the maize,

Or red with spirted purple of the vats,
Or foxlike in the vine; nor cares to walk

With Death and Morning on the Silver
Horns,

Nor wilt thou snare him in the white ravine,
Nor find him dropt upon the firths of ice, ¹⁹⁰

That huddling slant in furrow-cloven falls
To roll the torrent out of dusky doors.

But follow; let the torrent dance thee
down

To find him in the valley; let the wild
Lean-headed eagles yelp alone, and leave
The monstrous ledges there to slope, and
spill

Their thousand wreaths of dangling water-
smoke,

That like a broken purpose waste in air.

So waste not thou, but come; for all the
vales ²⁰⁰

Await thee; azure pillars of the hearth

Arise to thee; the children call, and I

Thy shepherd pipe, and sweet is every
sound,

Sweeter thy voice, but every sound is
sweet;

Myriads of rivulets hurrying thro' the lawn,
The moan of doves in immemorial elms,
And murmuring of innumerable bees.'

So she low-toned, while with shut
eyes I lay

Listening, then look'd. Pale was the
perfect face;

The bosom with long sighs labor'd;
and meek ²¹⁰

Seem'd the full lips, and mild the
luminous eyes,

And the voice trembled and the hand.
She said

Brokenly, that she knew it, she had
fail'd

In sweet humility, had fail'd in all;
That all her labor was but as a block

Left in the quarry ; but she still were
 loth,
 She still were loth to yield herself to
 one
 That wholly scorn'd to help their equal
 rights
 Against the sons of men and barbarous
 laws.
 She pray'd me not to judge their cause
 from her 220
 That wrong'd it, sought far less for
 truth than power
 In knowledge. Something wild with-
 in her breast,
 A greater than all knowledge, beat her
 down.
 And she had nursed me there from
 week to week ;
 Much had she learnt in little time. In
 part
 It was ill counsel had misled the girl
 To vex true hearts ; yet was she but a
 girl—
 ' Ah fool, and made myself a queen of
 farce !
 When comes another such ? never, I
 think,
 Till the sun drop, dead, from the signs.' Her voice
 Choked, and her forehead sank upon
 her hands, 231
 And her great heart thro' all the fault-
 ful past
 Went sorrowing in a pause I dared not
 break ;
 Till notice of a change in the dark
 world
 Was lispt about the acacias, and a
 bird,
 That early woke to feed her little ones,
 Sent from a dewy breast a cry for light.
 She moved, and at her feet the volume
 fell.

' Blame not thyself too much,' I
 said, ' nor blame
 Too much the sons of men and bar-
 barous laws ; 240
 These were the rough ways of the
 world till now.
 Henceforth thou hast a helper, me,
 that know
 The woman's cause is man's ; they
 rise or sink
 Together, dwarf'd or godlike, bond or
 free.

For she that out of Lethe scales with
 man
 The shining steps of Nature, shares
 with man
 His nights, his days, moves with him
 to one goal,
 Stays all the fair young planet in her
 hands—
 If she be small, slight-natured, miser-
 able,
 How shall men grow ? but work no
 more alone ! 250
 Our place is much ; as far as in us lies
 We two will serve them both in aid-
 ing her—
 Will clear away the parasitic forms
 That seem to keep her up but drag
 her down—
 Will leave her space to burgeon out
 of all
 Within her—let her make herself her
 own
 To give or keep, to live and learn and
 be
 All that not harms distinctive woman-
 hood.
 For woman is not undevelop't man,
 But diverse. Could we make her as
 the man, 260
 Sweet Love were slain ; his dearest
 bond is this,
 Not like to like, but like in difference.
 Yet in the long years liker must they
 grow ;
 The man be more of woman, she of
 man ;
 He gain in sweetness and in moral
 height,
 Nor lose the wrestling thews that
 throw the world ;
 She mental breadth, nor fail in child-
 ward care,
 Nor lose the childlike in the larger
 mind ;
 Till at the last she set herself to man,
 Like perfect music unto noble words ;
 And so these twain, upon the skirts of
 Time, 271
 Sit side by side, full-summ'd in all
 their powers,
 Dispensing harvest, sowing the to-be,
 Self-reverent each and reverencing
 each,
 Distinct in individualities,
 But like each other even as those who
 love.

Then comes the statelier Eden back to
men;

Then reign the world's great bridals,
chaste and calm;

Then springs the crowning race of
humankind. 279

May these things be!

Sighing she spoke: 'I fear
They will not.'

'Dear, but let us type them now
In our own lives, and this proud
watchword rest

Of equal; seeing either sex alone
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies
Nor equal, nor unequal. Each fulfils
Defect in each, and always thought
in thought,

Purpose in purpose, will in will, they
grow,

The single pure and perfect animal,
The two-cell'd heart beating, with
one full stroke,
Life.'

And again sighing she spoke: 'A
dream 290

That once was mine! what woman
taught you this?'

'Alone,' I said, 'from earlier than
I know,

Immersed in rich foreshadowings of
the world,

I loved the woman. He, that doth
not, lives

A drowning life, besotted in sweet self,
Or pines in sad experience worse than
death,

Or keeps his wing'd affections clipt
with crime.

Yet was there one thro' whom I loved
her, one

Not learned, save in gracious house-
hold ways,

Not perfect, nay, but full of tender
wants, 300

No angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
Interpreter between the gods and men,
Who look'd all native to her place,
and yet

On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a
sphere

Too gross to tread, and all male minds
perforce

Sway'd to her from their orbits as
they moved,

And girdled her with music. Happy
he

With such a mother! faith in woman-
kind

Beats with his blood, and trust in all
things high 310

Comes easy to him, and tho' he trip
and fall

He shall not blind his soul with clay.'

'But I,'
Said Ida, tremulously, 'so all unlike —
It seems you love to cheat yourself
with words;

This mother is your model. I have
heard

Of your strange doubts; they well
might be; I seem

A mockery to my own self: Never,
Prince!

You cannot love me.'

'Nay, but thee,' I said,
'From yearlong poring on thy pic-
tured eyes,

Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen,
and saw 320

Thee woman thro' the crust of iron
moods

That mask'd thee from men's rever-
ence up, and forced

Sweet love on pranks of saucy boy-
hood; now,

Given back to life, to life indeed, thro'
thee,

Indeed I love. The new day comes,
the light

Dearer for night, as dearer thou for
faults

Lived over. Lift thine eyes; my
doubts are dead,

My haunting sense of hollow shows;
the change,

This truthful change in thee has kill'd
it. Dear,

Look up, and let thy nature strike on
mine, 330

Like yonder morning on the blind
half-world.

Approach and fear not; breathe upon
my brows;

In that fine air I tremble, all the past
Melts mist-like into this bright hour,
and this

Is morn to more, and all the rich to-
come

Reels, as the golden Autumn wood-
land reels



“A dream
That once was mine! what woman taught you this?”

Athwart the smoke of burning weeds.
 Forgive me,
 I waste my heart in signs; let be.
 My bride,
 My wife, my life! O, we will walk
 this world,
 Yoked in all exercise of noble end, ³⁴⁰
 And so thro' those dark gates across
 the wild
 That no man knows. Indeed I love
 thee; come,
 Yield thyself up; my hopes and thine
 are one.
 Accomplish thou my manhood and
 thyself;
 Lay thy sweet hands in mine and
 trust to me.'

CONCLUSION

So closed our tale, of which I give
 you all

The random scheme as wildly as it
 rose.
 The words are mostly mine; for when
 we ceased
 There came a minute's pause, and
 Walter said,
 'I wish she had not yielded!' then to
 me,
 'What if you drest it up poetical-
 ly!'
 So pray'd the men, the women; I
 gave assent.
 Yet how to bind the scatter'd scheme
 of seven
 Together in one sheaf? What style
 could suit?
 The men required that I should give
 throughout
 The sort of mock-heroic gigantesque, ¹⁰
 With which we banter'd little Lilia
 first;
 The women—and perhaps they felt
 their power,

For something in the ballads which
 they sang,
 Or in their silent influence as they
 sat,
 Had ever seem'd to wrestle with bur-
 lesque,
 And drove us, last, to quite a solemn
 close —
 They hated banter, wish'd for some-
 thing real,
 A gallant fight, a noble princess — why
 Not make her true-heroic — true-sub-
 lime ?
 Or all, they said, as earnest as the
 close ?
 Which yet with such a framework
 scarce could be.
 Then rose a little feud betwixt the
 two,
 Betwixt the mockers and the realists ;
 And I, betwixt them both, to please
 them both,
 And yet to give the story as it rose,
 I moved as in a strange diagonal,
 And maybe neither pleased myself nor
 them.

But Lilia pleased me, for she took no
 part
 In our dispute ; the sequel of the
 tale
 Had touch'd her, and she sat, she
 pluck'd the grass.
 She flung it from her, thinking ; last,
 she flit
 A showery glance upon her aunt, and
 said,
 'You — tell us what we are' — who
 might have told,
 For she was cramm'd with theories
 out of books,
 But that there rose a shout. The gates
 were closed
 At sunset, and the crowd were swarm-
 ing now,
 To take their leave, about the garden
 rails.

So I and some went out to these ;
 we climb'd
 The slope to Vivian-place, and turning
 saw
 The happy valleys, half in light, and
 half
 Far-shadowing from the west, a land
 of peace ;

Gray halls alone among their massive
 groves ;
 Trim hamlets ; here and there a rustic
 tower
 Half-lost in belts of hop and breadths
 of wheat ;
 The shimmering glimpses of a stream ;
 the seas ;
 A red sail, or a white ; and far be-
 yond,
 Imagined more than seen, the skirts
 of France.

'Look there, a garden !' said my
 college friend,
 The Tory member's elder son, 'and
 there !
 God bless the narrow sea which keeps
 her off,
 And keeps our Britain, whole within
 herself,
 A nation yet, the rulers and the ruled —
 Some sense of duty, something of a
 faith,
 Some reverence for the laws ourselves
 have made,
 Some patient force to change them
 when we will,
 Some civic manhood firm against the
 crowd —
 But yonder, whiff ! there comes a sud-
 den heat,
 The gravest citizen seems to lose his
 head,
 The king is scared, the soldier will not
 fight,
 The little boys begin to shoot and
 stab,
 A kingdom topples over with a shriek
 Like an old woman, and down rolls
 the world
 In mock heroics stranger than our
 own ;
 Revolts, republics, revolutions, most
 No graver than a schoolboys' barring
 out ;
 Too comic for the solemn things they
 are,
 Too solemn for the comic touches in
 them,
 Like our wild Princess with as wise a
 dream
 As some of theirs — God bless the nar-
 row seas !
 I wish they were a whole Atlantic
 broad.'

'Have patience,' I replied, 'ourselves are full
Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams
Are but the needful preludes of the truth.
For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,
The sport half-science, fill me with a faith,
This fine old world of ours is but a child
Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it time
To learn its limbs; there is a hand that guides.'

In such discourse we gain'd the garden rails, 80

And there we saw Sir Walter where he stood,
Before a tower of crimson holly-oaks,
Among six boys, head under head, and look'd
No little lily-handed baronet he,
A great broad-shoulder'd genial Englishman,
A lord of fat prize-oxen and of sheep,
A raiser of huge melons and of pine,
A patron of some thirty charities,
A pamphleteer on guano and on grain,
A quarter-sessions chairman, abler none;
Fair-hair'd and redder than a windy morn;
Now shaking hands with him, now him, of those



"You — tell us what we are" —

That stood the nearest — now address'd
 to speech —
 Who spoke few words and pithy, such
 as closed
 Welcome, farewell, and welcome for
 the year
 To follow. A shout rose again, and
 made
 The long line of the approaching rook-
 ery swerve
 From the elms, and shook the branches
 of the deer
 From slope to slope thro' distant ferns,
 and rang
 Beyond the bourn of sunset — O, a
 shout ¹⁰⁰
 More joyful than the city-roar that
 hails
 Premier or king! Why should not
 these great sirs
 Give up their parks some dozen times
 a year
 To let the people breathe? So thrice
 they cried,
 I likewise, and in groups they stream'd
 away.

But we went back to the Abbey,
 and sat on,
 So much the gathering darkness
 charm'd; we sat
 But spoke not, rapt in nameless rev-
 erie,
 Perchance upon the future man. The
 walls
 Blacken'd about us, bats wheel'd, and
 owls whoop'd, ¹¹⁰
 And gradually the powers of the
 night,
 That range above the region of the
 wind,
 Deepening the courts of twilight broke
 them up
 Thro' all the silent spaces of the
 worlds,
 Beyond all thought into the heaven
 of heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,
 Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir
 Ralph
 From those rich silks, and home well-
 pleased we went.





ARTHUR HENRY HALLAM

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII

STRONG Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy
face,

By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove ;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade ;
Thou madest Life in man and brute ;
Thou madest Death ; and to thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust :
Thou madest man, he knows not
why,

He thinks he was not made to die ;
And thou hast made him : thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou.
Our wills are ours, we know not how ;
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
 They have their day and cease to
 be;
 They are but broken lights of thee,
 And thou, O Lord, art more than
 they.

We have but faith: we cannot know,
 For knowledge is of things we see;
 And yet we trust it comes from
 thee,
 A beam in darkness: let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to
 more,
 But more of reverence in us dwell;
 That mint and soul, according well,
 May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight;
 We mock thee when we do not fear:
 But help thy foolish ones to bear;
 Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seem'd my sin in me,
 What seem'd my worth since I
 began;
 For merit lives from man to man,
 And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
 Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
 I trust he lives in thee, and there
 I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering
 cries,
 Confusions of a wasted youth;
 Forgive them where they fail in
 truth,
 And in thy wisdom make me wise.
 1849.

I

I held it truth, with him who sings
 To one clear harp in divers tones,
 That men may rise on stepping-
 stones
 Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years
 And find in loss a gain to match?
 Or reach a hand thro' time to catch
 The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be
 drown'd,
 Let darkness keep her raven gloss.
 Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
 To dance with Death, to beat the
 ground,

Than that the victor Hours should
 scorn
 The long result of love, and boast,
 'Behold the man that loved and lost
 But all he was is overworn.'

II

Old yew, which graspest at the stones
 That name the underlying dead,
 Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
 Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
 And bring the firstling to the flock;
 And in the dusk of thee the clock
 Beats out the little lives of men.

O, not for thee the glow, the bloom,
 Who changest not in any gale,
 Nor branding summer suns avail
 To touch thy thousand years of gloom;

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
 Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
 I seem to fall from out my blood
 And grow incorporate into thee.

III

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
 O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
 O sweet and bitter in a breath,
 What whispers from thy lying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly
 run;
 A web is woven across the sky;
 From out waste places comes a cry,
 And murmurs from the dying sun;

And all the phantom, Nature,
 stands—
 With all the music in her tone,
 A hollow echo of my own, —
 A hollow form with empty hands.'

And shall I take a thing so blind,
 Embrace her as my natural good;
 Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
 Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV

To Sleep I give my powers away ;
 My will is bondsman to the dark ;
 I sit within a helmless bark,
 And with my heart I muse and say :

O heart, how fares it with thee now.
 That thou shouldst fall from thy
 desire,

Who scarcely darest to inquire,
 'What is it makes me beat so low ?'

Something it is which thou hast lost,
 Some pleasure from thine early
 years.

Break, thou deep vase of chilling
 tears,

That grief hath snaken into frost !

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
 All night below the darken'd eyes ;
 With morning wakes the will, and
 cries,

'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

I sometimes hold it half a sin
 To put in words the grief I feel ;
 For words, like Nature, half reveal
 And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
 A use in measured language lies ;
 The sad mechanic exercise,
 Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
 Like coarsest clothes against the
 cold ;

But that large grief which these en-
 fold
 Is given in outline and no more.

VI

One writes, that 'other friends remain.'
 That 'loss is common to the race' —
 And common is the commonplace,
 And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
 My own less bitter, rather more.
 Too common ! Never morning wore
 To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
 Who pledgedst now thy gallant son,

A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
 Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
 Thy sailor, — while thy head is
 bow'd,

His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
 At that last hour to please him well ;
 Who mused on all I had to tell,
 And something written, something
 thought ;

Expecting still his advent home ;
 And ever met him on his way
 With wishes, thinking, 'here to-day,'
 Or 'here to-morrow will he come.'

O, somewhere, meek, unconscious
 dove,

That sittest ranging golden hair ;
 And glad to find thyself so fair,
 Poor child, that waitest for thy love !

For now her father's chimney glows
 In expectation of a guest :
 And thinking 'this will please him
 best,'

She takes a riband or a rose ;

For he will see them on to-night ;
 And with the thought her color
 burns ;

And, having left the glass, she turns
 Once more to set a ringlet right ;

And, even when she turn'd, the curse
 Had fallen, and her future lord
 Was drown'd in passing thro' the
 ford,

Or kill'd in falling from his horse.

O, what to her shall be the end ?
 And what to me remains of good ?
 To her perpetual maidenhood,
 And unto me no second friend.

VII

Dark house, by which once more I
stand

Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used to
beat

So quickly, waiting for a hand,

IN MEMORIAM

A hand that can be clasp'd no more—
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly thro' the drizzling
rain
On the bald street breaks the blank
day.

VIII

A happy lover who has come
To look on her that loves him well,
Who 'lights and rings the gateway
bell,
And learns her gone and far from
home;

He saddens, all the magic light
Dies off at once from bower and
hall,
And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight :

So find I every pleasant spot
In which we two were wont to
meet,
The field, the chamber, and the
street,
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
In those deserted walks, may find
A flower beat with rain and wind,
Which once she foster'd up with care ;

So seems it in my deep regret,
O my forsaken heart, with thee
And this poor flower of poesy
Which, little cared for, fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanish'd eye,
I go to plant it on his tomb,
That if it can it there may bloom,
Or, dying, there at least may die.

IX

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
Sail'st the placid ocean plains
With my lost Arthur's loved re-
mains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him
o'er.

So draw him home to those that
mourn

In vain; a favorable speed
Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor,
bright
As our pure love, thro' early light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above ;
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the
prow ;
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps
now,
My friend, the brother of my love ;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run ;
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me.

X

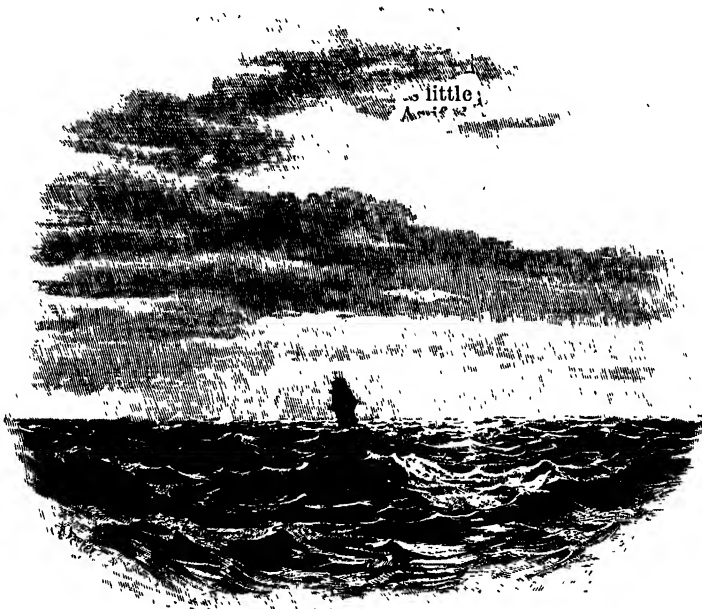
I hear the noise about thy keel ;
I hear the bell struck in the night ;
I see the cabin-window bright ;
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,
And travell'd men from foreign
lands ;
And letters unto trembling hands ;
And, thy dark freight, a vanish'd
life.

So bring him ; we have idle dreams :
This look of quiet flatters thus
Our home-bred fancies. O, to us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
That takes the sunshine and the
rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The change of the grapes of God ;

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom-deep in
brine,
And hands so often clasp'd in
mine,
Should toss with tangle and with
shells.



'Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
Sallest the placid ocean-plains'

XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground;

Calm and deep peace on this high
wold,

And on these dews that drench the
furze,

And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold;

Calm and still light on yon great
plain

That sweeps with all its autumn
bowers,

And crowded farms and lessening
towers,

To mingle with the bounding main;

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall,

And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair;

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in
rest,

And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving
deep.

XII

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear thro' heaven a tale of
woe,

Some dolorous message knit be-
low

The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go, I cannot stay;
I leave this mortal ark behind,

A weight of nerves without a
mind,

And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern
skies,

And see the sails at distance,
And linger weeping on the

And saying, 'Comes he thus, my
friend ?

Is this the end of all my care ?
And circle moaning in the air,
Is this the end ? Is this the end ?

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return
To where the body sits, and learn
That I have been an hour away.

XIII

Tears of the widower, when he sees
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
And moves his doubtful arms, and
feels

Her place is empty, fall like these ;

Which weep a loss for ever new,
A void where heart on heart re-
posed ;

And, where warm hands have prest
and closed,
Silence, till I be silent too ;

Which weep the comrade of my
choice,

An awful thought, a life removed,
The human-hearted man I loved,
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come, Time, and teach me, many
years,

I do not suffer in a dream ;
For now so strange do these things
seem,

Mine eyes have leisure for their
tears,

My fancies time to rise on wing,
And glance about the approaching

sails,
As tho' they brought but merchants'

bales,
And not the burthen that they bring.

XIV

If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touch'd the land to-
day,

And I went down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port ;

And standing, muffled round with woe,
Should see thy passengers in rank
Come stepping lightly down the
plank,
And beckoning unto those they know ;

And if along with these should come
The man I held as half-divine,
Should strike a sudden hand in
mine,
And ask a thousand things of home ;

And I should tell him all my pain,
And how my life had droop'd of
late,

And he should sorrow o'er my state
And marvel what possess'd my brain ;

And I perceived no touch of change,
No hint of death in all his frame,
But found him all in all the same,
I should not feel it to be strange.

XV

To-night the winds begin to rise
And roar from yonder dropping day,
The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
The rooks are blown about the skies ;

The forest crack'd, the waters curl'd,
The cattle huddled on the lea,
And wildly dash'd on tower and tree
The sunbeam strikes along the world ;

And but for fancies, which aver
That all thy motions gently pass
Athwart a plane of molten glass,
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud ;
And but for fear it is not so,
The wild unrest that lives in woe
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
And onward drags a laboring breast,
And topples round the dreary west,
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

XVI

What words are these have fallen
from me ?
Can calm despair and wild unrest

Be tenants of a single breast,
Or Sorrow such a changeling be ?

Or doth she only seem to take
The touch of change in calm or storm,
But knows no more of transient form
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
Hung in the shadow of a heaven ?
Or has the shock, so harshly given,
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
And staggers blindly ere she sink ?
And stunn'd me from my power to think
And all my knowledge of myself ;

And made me that delirious man
Whose fancy fuses old and new,
And flashes into false and true,
And mingles all without a plan ?

slipped
XVII

Thou comest, much wept for ; such a breeze
Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer
Was as the whisper of an air
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,
Week after week ; the days go by ;
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou mayst roam,
future voyage
My blessings like a line of light,
Is on the waters day and night,
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
Mid-ocean spare thee, sacred bark,
And balmy drops in summer dark
Slide from the bosom of the stars ;

the benign influence of stars
So kind an office hath been done,
Such precious relics brought by thee,
The dust of him I shall not see
Till all my widow'd race be run.

XVIII

'T is well ; 't is something ; we may stand

Where he in English earth is laid,
And from his ashes may be made
The violet of his native land.

'T is little ; but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blest
Among familiar names to rest
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,
And come, whatever loves to weep,
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, even yet, if this might be,
I, falling on his faithful heart,
Would breathing thro' his lips impart
The life that almost dies in me ;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
And slowly forms the firmer mind,
Treasuring the look it cannot find,
The words that are not heard again.

Werner's River
XIX
The Danube to the Severn gave
The darken'd heart that beat no more ;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hush'd nor moved along,
And hush'd my deepest grief of all,
When fill'd with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.
The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls ;
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

XX

The lesser griefs that may be said,
That breathe a thousand tender
vows,
Are but as servants in a house
Where lies the master newly dead ;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
And weep the fulness from the mind.
‘It will be hard,’ they say, ‘to find
Another service such as this.’

My lighter moods are like to these,
That out of words a comfort win;
But there are other griefs within,
And tears that at their fountain freeze;

For by the hearth the children sit
Cold in that atmosphere of death,
And scarce endure to draw the
breath,
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit;

But open converse is there none,
So much the vital spirits sink
To see the vacant chair, and think,
‘How good! how kind! and he is
gone.’

XXI

I sing to him that rests below,
And, since the grasses round me
wave,
I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes wherewith to
blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
And sometimes harshly will he
speak:

‘This fellow would make weakness
weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men.’

Another answers: ‘Let him be,
He loves to make parade of pain,
That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy.’

A third is wroth: ‘Is this an hour
For private sorrow’s barren song,
When more and more the people
throng

The chairs and thrones of civil power?

‘A time to sicken and to swoon,
When Science reaches forth her arms

To test from world to world, and
charms
Her secret from the latest moon?’

Behold, ye speak an idle thing;
Ye never knew the sacred dust.

I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing;

And one is glad; her note is gay;
For now her little ones have ~~run~~ ^{run};
And one is sad; her note is changed,
Because her brood is stolen away.

Can bridge? XXII
The path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased us
well,
Thro’ four sweet years arose and fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to
snow;

And we with singing cheer’d the way,
And crown’d with all the season
lent,
From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to May.

But where the path we walk’d began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope;
As we descended following Hope,
There sat the Shadow fear’d of man;

Who broke our fair companionship,
And spread his mantle dark and
cold,

And wrapt thee formless in the fold,
And dull’d the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, tho’ I walk in haste,
And think that somewhere in the
waste

The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
Or breaking into song by fits,
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloak’d from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I came,
Or on to where the pathway leads;

And crying, How changed from where
it ran

Thro’ lands where not a leaf was
dumb,

But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan

When each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed with
Thought
Ere Thought could wed itself with
Speech;

And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time could
bring, *delightful things*
And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood;
And many an old philosophy *speech*
On Argive heights divinely sang,
And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arcady.

XXIV

And was the day of my delight
As pure and perfect as I say?
The very source and fount of day
Is dash'd with wandering isles of
night.

If all was good and fair we met,
This earth had been the Paradise
It never look'd to human eyes
Since our first sun arose and set.

And is it that the haze of grief *base - as the*
Makes former gladness loom so
great?

The lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief? *con-*

Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far,
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not when we moved therein?

XXV

I know that this was Life,—the
track
Whereon with equal feet we fared;
And then, as now, the day pre-
pared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
As light as carrier-birds in air;
I loved the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of Love;

Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
When mighty Love would cleave in
twain
The lading of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.



16. 'They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave'

Still onward winds the dreary way;
I with it, for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.

And if that eye, which watches guilt
And goodness, and hath power to
see

Within the green the moulder'd tree,
And towers fallen as soon as built —

O, if indeed that eye foresee
Or see — in Him is no before —
In more of life true life no more
And Love the indifference to be,

Then might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That Shadow waiting with the keys,
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

XXVII

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods;

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfetter'd by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most:
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of
Christ.

The moon is hid, the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to
hill

Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and
moor

Swell out and fall, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound;

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now thate, and now decrease,
Peace and goodwill, goodwill and
peace,
Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wish'd no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would
break

Before I heard those bells again;

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controll'd me when a boy;
They bring me sorrow touch'd with
joy,
The merry, merry bells of Yule.

XXIX

With such compelling cause to grieve
As daily vexes household peace,
And chains regret to his decease,
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve,

Which brings no more a welcome guest
To enrich the threshold of the night
With shower'd largess of delight
In dance and song and game and jest?

Yet go, and while the holly boughs
Entwine the cold baptismal font,
Make one wreath more for Use and
Wont,

That guard the portals of the house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,
Gray nurses, loving nothing new,
Why should they miss their yearly
due?

Before their time? They too will die.

XXX

With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas
hearth;

A rainy cloud possess'd the earth,
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
We gamboll'd, making vain pre-
tence

Of gladness, with an awful sense
Of one mute Shadow watching all.

We paused: the winds were in the
beech;

We heard them sweep the winter
land;
And in a circle hand-in-hand
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang;
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
A merry song we sang with him
Last year; impetuously we sang.

We ceased; a gentler feeling crept
Upon us: surely rest is meet,
'They rest,' we said, 'their sleep is
sweet,
And silence follow'd, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range;
Once more we sang: 'They do not
die
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, although they
change;

Rapt from the fickle and the frail
With gather'd power, yet the same,
Pierces the keen seraphic flame
From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
Draw forth the cheerful day from
night:
O Father, touch the east, and
light
The light that shone when Hope was
born.

XXXI

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house return'd,
Was this demanded — if he yearn'd
To hear her weeping by his grave?

'Where wert thou, brother, those four
days?'

There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,
The streets were fill'd with joyful
sound, even God men's
A solemn gladness even crown'd
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unreveal'd;

He told it not, or something seal'd
The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And he that brought him back is there.
Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,
She bows, she bathes the Saviour's
feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful
prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure;
What souls possess themselves so
pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs?

XXXIII

O thou that after toil and storm
Mayst seem to have reach'd a purer
air,
Whose faith has centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays
Her early heaven, her happy views;
Nor thou with shadow'd hint con-
fuse

A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good.
O, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine!

See thou, that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And even for want of such a type.

XXXIV

My own dim life should teach me
this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is;

Universe
This round of green, this orb of flame,
Fantastic beauty; such as lurks
In some wild poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?
'T were hardly worth my while to choose

Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die;

'T were best at once to sink to peace,
Like birds the charming serpent draws.

To drop head-foremost in the jaws
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

XXXV

Yet if some voice that man could trust
Should murmur from the narrow house,

'The cheeks drop in, the body bows;
Man dies, nor is there hope in dust;'

Might I not say? 'Yet even here,
But for one hour, O Love, I strive
To keep so sweet a thing alive.'
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
The sound of streams that swift or slow

Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
'The sound of that forgetful shore
Will change my sweetness more and more,
Half-dead to know that I shall die.'

O me, what profits it to put
An idle case? If Death were seen
At first as Death, Love had not been,
Or been in narrowest working shut,

More fellowship of sluggish moods,
Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape
Had bruised the herb and crush'd the grape,
And bask'd and batten'd in the woods.

XXXVI

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
Deep-seated in our mystic frame,

We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin;

For Wisdom dealt with mortal powers,
Where truth in closest words shall fail,

When truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought

With human hands the creed of creeds

In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,

Or builds the house, or digs the grave,

And those wild eyes that watch the wave

In roarings round the coral reef.

XXXVII

Urania speaks with darken'd brow:
'Thou protest here where thou art least;

This faith has many a purer priest,
And many an abler voice than thou.

'Go down beside thy native rill,
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
About the ledges of the hill.'

And my Melpomene replies,
A touch of shame upon her cheek:
'I am not worthy even to speak
Of thy prevailing mysteries;

'For I am but an earthly Muse,
And owning but a little art
To lull with song an aching heart,
And render human love his dues;

'But brooding on the dear one dead,
And all he said of things divine,
And dear to me as sacred wine
To dying lips is all he said,—

'I murmur'd, as I came along,
Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd,
And loiter'd in the master's field,
And darken'd sanctities with song.'



'Streams that swift or slow
Draw down Æonian hills'

XXXVIII

With weary steps I loiter on,
Tho' always under alter'd skies
The purple from the distance flies,
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
The herald melodies of spring,
But in the songs I love to sing
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here,
Survive in spirits render'd free,
Then are these songs I sing of thee
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX

Old warder of these buried bones,
And answering now my random
stroke
With fruitful cloud and living
smoke,

Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless
head,

To thee too comes the golden hour
When flower is feeling after flower;
But Sorrow, — next upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of
men, —
What whisper'd from her lying
lips?

Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
And passes into gloom again.

XL

Could we forget the widow'd hour
And look on Spirits breathed away,
As on a maiden in the day
When first she wears her orange-flower!

When crown'd with blessing she doth
rise
To take her latest leave of home,
And hopes and light regrets that
come
Make April of her tender eyes;

And doubtful joys the father move,
And tears are on the mother's face,
As parting with a long embrace
She enters other realms of love;

Her office there to rear, to teach,
Becoming as is meet and fit
A link among the days, to knit
The generations each with each;

And, doubtless, unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In those great offices that suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern!
How often shall her old fireside
Be cheer'd with tidings of the bride,
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,
And bring her babe, and make her boast,
Till even those that miss'd her most
Shall count new things as dear as old;

But thou and I have shaken hands,
Till growing winters lay me low;
My paths are in the fields I know,
And thine in undiscover'd lands.

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
Did ever rise from high to higher,
As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turn'd to something strange,
And I have lost the links that bound
Thy changes; here upon the ground,
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be —
That I could wing my will with might
To leap the grades of life and light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee!

For tho' my nature rarely yields
To that vague fear implied in death,
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
The howlings from forgotten fields;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor,
An inner trouble I behold,
A spectral doubt which makes me cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind
The wonders that have come to thee,

Thro' all the secular to-be,
But evermore a life behind.

XLII

I vex my heart with fancies dim.
He still outstript me in the race;
It was but unity of place
That made me dream I rank'd with him.

And so may Place retain us still,
And he the much-beloved again,
A lord of large experience, train
To ripen growth the mind and will;

And what delights can equal those
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
When one that loves, but knows
A truth from one that loves and knows?

XLIII

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit's folded bloom
Thro' all its intervital bloom
In some long trance should slumber

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
Bare of the body, might it last,
And silent traces of the past
Be all the color of the flower:
So then were nothing lost to man;
So that still garden of the souls
In many a figured leaf enrolls
The total world since life began:

And love will last as pure and whole
As when he loved me here in Time,
And at the spiritual prime
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

How fares it with the happy dead?
For here the man is more and more
But he forgets the days before
God shut the doorways of his life

The days have vanish'd, five, and ten
And yet perhaps the hoarcarce had
Gives out at times — he
A little flash, a mystic hint

Or, if we held the doctrine sound
For life outliving heats of youth,
Yet who would preach it as a truth
To those that eddy round and round?

Hold thou the good, define it well;
For fear divine Philosophy
Should push beyond her mark, and
be

Procure us to the Lords of Hell.

Yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature's sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroy'd,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile com-
plete;

That not a worm is cloyen in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivell'd in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last — far off — at last, to all —
And every winter change to spring

So runs my dream; but what am I?
An infant crying in the night;
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry.

LV

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams?
So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life,

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,
I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares

Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and
grope, and gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

So careful of the type? but no.
From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries, 'A thousand types are
gone;
I care for nothing, all shall go.

Thou makest thine appeal to me:
I bring to life, I bring to death;
'The spirit does but mean the breath'
I know no more.' And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seem'd so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who roll'd the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him funes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law —
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek'd against his
creed —

Who loved, who suffer'd countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or seal'd within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tare each other in their slime,
Were mellow music match'd with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVII

Peace; come away: the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song.
Peace; come away: we do him
wrong
To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come; let us go: your cheeks are pale;
But half my life I leave behind.

Methinks my friend is richly
shrined;
But I shall pass, my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
One set slow bell will seem to toll
The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
Eternal greetings to the dead;
And 'Ave, Ave, Ave,' said,
'Adieu, adieu,' for evermore.

LVIII

In those sad words I took farewell.
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
As drop by drop the water falls
In vaults and catacombs, they fell;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
Of hearts that beat from day to
day,
Half-conscious of their dying clay,
And those cold crypts where they shall
cease.

The high Muse answer'd: 'Wherefore
grieve
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear?
Abide a little longer here,
And thou shalt take a nobler leave.'

LIX

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom-friend and half of life;
As I confess it needs must be?

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
And put thy harsher moods aside,
If thou wilt have me wise and good?

My centred passion cannot move,
Nor will it lessen from to-day;
But I'll have leave at times to
play
As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
With so much hope for years to
come,
That, howsoever I know thee, some
Could hardly tell what name were
thine.

LX

He past, a soul of nobler tone;
My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart is
set
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
She finds the baseness of her lot,
Half jealous of she knows not what,
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;
She sighs amid her narrow days,
Moving about the household ways,
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,
And tease her till the day draws by;
At night she weeps, 'How vain am I!
How should he love a thing so low?'

LXI

If, in thy second state sublime,
Thy ransom'd reason change replies
With all the circle of the wise,
The perfect flower of human time;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
How dimly character'd and slight,
How dwarf'd a growth of cold and
night,
How blanch'd with darkness must I
grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
Where thy first form was made a
man;
I loved thee, Spirit, and love, nor can
The soul of Shakespeare love thee
more.

LXII

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast
Could make thee somewhat blench
or fail,
Then be my love an idle tale
And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined,
When he was little more than boy,
On some unworthy heart with joy,
But lives to wed an equal mind,

And breathes a novel world, the while
His other passion wholly dies.

Or in the light of deeper eyes
Is matter for a flying smile.

LXIII

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,
And love in which my hound has
part,
Can hang no weight upon my heart
In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,
As thou, perchance, art more than I,
And yet I spare them sympathy,
And I would set their pains at ease.

So mayst thou watch me where I
weep,
As, unto vaster motions bound,
The circuits of thine orbit round
A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXIV

Dost thou look back on what hath
been,
As some divinely gifted man,
Whose life in low estate began
And on a simple village green;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy
chance,
And breasts the blows of circum-
stance,
And grapples with his evil star;

Who makes by force his merit known
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne;

And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on Fortune's crowning
slope

The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
When all his active powers are
still,

A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
While yet beside its vocal springs
He play'd at counsellors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea
And reaps the labor of his hands,
Or in the furrow musing stands:
'Does my old friend remember me?'

LXV

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt;
I lull a fancy trouble-tost
With 'Love's too precious to be lost
A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing,
'Till out of painful phases wrought
There flutters up a happy thought,
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing;

'Since we deserved the name of friends
And thine effect so lives in me,
A part of mine may live in thee
And move thee on to noble ends.

LXVI

You thought my heart too far diseased;
You wonder when my fancies play
To find me gay among the gay,
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crost,
Which makes a desert in the mind,
Has made me kindly with my kind,
And like to him whose sight is lost;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,
Whose jest among his friends is free,
Who takes the children on his knee,
And winds their curls about his hand.

He plays with threads, he beats his
chair

For pastime, dreaming of the sky;
His inner day can never die,
His night of loss is always there.

LXVII

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest
By that broad water of the west
There comes a glory on the walls:

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away,
From off my bed the moonlight dies;

And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipt in gray ;

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers in the dawn.

LXVIII

When in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times
my breath ;
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows
not Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead.

A...
I walk as ere I walk'd forlorn,
When all our path was fresh with
dew ;
And all the bugle breezes blew
Reveillee to the breaking morn'.

But what is this ? I turn about,
I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad I know not
why,
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt ;

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth ;
It is the trouble of my youth
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXIX

I dream'd there would be Spring no
more,
That Nature's ancient power was
lost ;
The streets were black with smoke
and frost,
They chatter'd trifles at the door ;

I wander'd from the noisy town,
I found a wood with thorny boughs ;
I took the thorns to bind my brows,
I wore them like a civic crown ;

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns
From youth and babe and hoary
hairs :

They call'd me in the public squares
The fool that wears a crown of thorns.

They call'd me fool, they call'd me
child :

I found an angel of the night ;

The voice was low, the look was
bright ;
He look'd upon my crown and smiled.

He reach'd the glory of a hand,
That seem'd to touch it into leaf ;
The voice was not the voice of
grief,
The words were hard to understand.

LXX

I cannot see the features right,
When on the gloom I strive to
paint

The face I know ; the hues are faint
And mix with hollow masks of night ;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons
wrought,

A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
A hand that points, and palled shapes
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought ;

And crowds that stream from yawning
floors,

And shoals of pucker'd faces drive ;
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless shores ;

Till all at once beyond the will
I hear a wizard music roll,
And thro' a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

LXXI

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and
trance

And madness, thou hast forged at
last

A night-long present of the past
In which we went thro' summer
France.

Hadst thou such credit with the
soul ?

Then bring an opiate trebly strong,
Drug down the blindfold sense of
wrong, *profound sense of loss*
That so my pleasure may be whole ;

While now we talk as once we talk'd
Of men and minds, the dust of
change,

The days that grow to something
strange,

In walking as of old we walk'd

Beside the river's wooded reach,
The fortress, and the mountain
ridge,
The cataract flashing from the
bridge,
The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXII
Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
And howlest, issuing out of night,
With blasts that blow the poplar
white,
And lash with storm the streaming
pane?

Day, when my crown'd estate begun
To pine in that reverse of doom,

Which sicken'd every living bloom,
And blurr'd the splendor of the
sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
With thy quick tears that make the
rose
Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Her crimson fringes to the shower;

Who mightst have heaved a windless
flame
Up the deep East, or, whispering,
play'd
'A chequer-work of beam and
shade

Along the hills, yet look'd the same,



'I found a wood with thorny boughs'

As wan, as chill, as wild as now;
Day, mark'd as with some hideous
crime,

When the dark hand struck down
thro' time, ~~the dark hand struck down~~
And cancell'd nature's best: but thou,

Lift as thou mayst thy burthen'd
brows

Thro' clouds that drench the morn-
ing star,

And whirl the ungarner'd sheaf afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous
day,

Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the
ground.

LXXIII

So many worlds, so much to do,
So little done, such things to be,
How know I what had need of thee,
For thou wert strong as thou wert
true?

The fame is quench'd that I foresaw,
The head hath miss'd an earthly
wreath:

I curse not Nature, no, nor Death;
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass; the path that each man trod
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds.
What fame is left for human deeds
In endless age? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
And self-infolds the large results
Of force that would have forged a
name.

LXXIV

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
To those that watch it more and
more,

A likeness, hardly seen before,
Comes out — to some one of his race;

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
I see thee what thou art, and know
Thy likeness to the wise below,
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
And what I see I leave unsaid,
Nor speak it, knowing Death has
made

His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXV

I leave thy praises unexpress'd
In verse that brings myself relief
And by the measure of my grief
I leave thy greatness to be guess'd.

What practice howsoe'er expert
In fitting aptest words to things,
Or voice the richest-toned that
sings,

Hath power to give thee as thou wert?

I care not in these fading days
To raise a cry that lasts not long,
And round thee with the breeze of
song

To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perish'd in the green,
And, while we breathe beneath the
sun,

The world which credits what is
done

Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame;
But somewhere, out of human view,
Whate'er thy hands are set to do
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

LXXVI

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
And in a moment set thy face
Where all the starry heavens of space
Are sharpen'd to a needle's end;

Take wings of foresight; lighten thro'
The secular abyss to come,
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
Before the mouldering of a yew;

And if the matin songs, that woke
The darkness of our planet, last,
Thine own shall wither in the vast,
Ere half the lifetime of an oak

Ere these have clothed their branchy
bowers
With fifty Mays, thy songs are
vain;

And what are they when these remain
The ruin'd shells of hollow towers ?

LXXVII

What hope is here for modern rhyme
To him who turns a musing eye
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie
Foreshorten'd in the tract of time ?

These mortal lullabies of pain
May bind a book, may line a box,
May serve to curl a maiden's locks ;
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,
And, passing, turn the page that tells
A grief, then changed to something
else,
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that ? My darken'd ways
Shall ring with music all the same ;
To breathe my loss is more than
fame,
To utter love more sweet than praise.

LXXVIII

Again at Christmas did we weave
The holly round the Christmas
hearth ;
The silent snow possess'd the earth,
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve.

The yule-clog sparkled keen with
frost,
No wing of wind the region swept,
But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
Again our ancient games had place,
The mimic picture's breathing grace,
And dance and song and hoodman-
blind.

Who show'd a token of distress ?
No single tear, no mark of pain —
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane ?
O grief, can grief be changed to less ?

O last regret, regret can die ! —
No — mixt with all this mystic
frame,
Her deep relations are the same,
But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXIX

'More than my brothers are to me,' —
Let this not vex thee, noble heart !
I know thee of what force thou art,
To hold the costliest love in fee.
But thou and I are one in kind,
As moulded like in Nature's mint ;
And hill and wood and field did print
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd
Thro' all his eddying coves, the same
All winds that roam the twilight
came
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffer'd vows,
One lesson from one book we learn'd,
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turn'd
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
But he was rich where I was poor,
And he supplied my want the more
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXX

If any vague desire should rise,
That holy Death ere Arthur died
Had moved me kindly from his side,
And dropt the dust on tearless eyes ;
Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
The grief my loss in him had
wrought,
A grief as deep as life or thought,
But stay'd in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain ;
I hear the sentence that he speaks ;
He bears the burthen of the weeks,
But turns his burthen into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free ;
And, influence-rich to soothe and
save,
Unused example from the grave
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXXI

Could I have said while he was here,
'My love shall now no further range ;
There cannot come a mellow
change,
For now is love mature in ear' ?

Love, then, had hope of richer store:
 What end is here to my complaint?
 This haunting whisper makes me faint,
 'More years had made me love thee more.'

But Death returns an answer sweet:
 'My sudden frost was sudden gain
 And gave all ripeness to the grain,
 It might have drawn from after-heat.'

LXXXII

I wage not any feud with Death
 For changes wrought on form and face;
 No lower life that earth's embrace
 May breed with him can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,
 From state to state the spirit walks;
 And these are but the shatter'd stalks,
 Or ruin'd chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
 The use of virtue out of earth;
 I know transplanted human worth
 Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
 The wrath that garners in my heart:
 He put our lives so far apart
 We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXIII

Dip down upon the northern shore,
 O sweet new-year delaying long;
 Thou doest expectant Nature wrong;
 Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
 Thy sweetness from its proper place?
 Can trouble live with April days,
 Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
 The little speedwell's darling blue,
 Deep tulips dash'd with fiery dew,
 Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, new-year, delaying long,
 Delayest the sorrow in my blood,

That longs to burst a frozen bud
 And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXIV

When I contemplate all alone
 The life that had been thine below,
 And fix my thoughts on all the glow
 To which thy crescent would have grown,

I see thee sitting crown'd with good,
 A central warmth diffusing bliss
 In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,
 On all the branches of thy blood;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine;
 For now the day was drawing on,
 When thou shouldst link thy life
 with one
 Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled 'Uncle' on my knee;
 But that remorseless iron hour
 Made cypress of her orange flower,
 Despair of hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
 To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.

I see their unborn faces shine
 Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honor'd guest,
 Thy partner in the flowery walk
 Of letters, genial table-talk,
 Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labor fills
 The lips of men with honest praise,
 And sun by sun the happy days
 Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;
 And all the train of bounteous hours

Conduct, by paths of growing powers,
 To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
 Her lavish mission richly wrought,
 Leaving great legacies of thought,
 Thy spirit should fall from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,
As link'd with thine in love and fate,
And, hovering o'er the dolorous
 strait
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
And He that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining
 hand,
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore
 wake
The old bitterness again, and break
The low beginnings of content!

LXXXV

This truth came borne with bier and
 pall,

I felt it, when I sorrow'd most,
'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all—

O true in word, and tried in deed,
Demanding, so to bring relief
To this which is our common grief,
What kind of life is that I lead;

And whether trust in things above
Be dimm'd of sorrow, or sustain'd;
And whether love for him have
 drain'd

My capabilities of love;

Your words have virtue such as draws
A faithful answer from the breast,
Thro' light reproaches, half exprest,
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
Till on mine ear this message falls,
That in Vienna's fatal walls
God's finger touch'd him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair
That range above our mortal state,
In circle round the blessed gate,
Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,
And show'd him in the fountain
 fresh
All knowledge that the sons of flesh
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remain'd, whose hopes were dim,
Whose life, whose thoughts were
 little worth,
To wander on a darken'd earth,
Where all things round me breathed
 of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
O heart, with kindest motion warm.
O sacred essence, other form,
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I,
How much of act at human hands
The sense of human will demands
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
His being working in mine own,
The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses deck'd
With gifts of grace, that might ex-
 press
All-comprehensive tenderness,
All-subtilizing intellect:

And so my passion hath not swerved
To works of weakness, but I find
An image comforting the mind,
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
That loved to handle spiritual strife,
Diffused the shock thro' all my life,
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
For other friends that once I met;
Nor can it suit me to forget
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love: I count it crime
To mourn for any overmuch;
I, the divided half of such
A friendship as had master'd Time;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
Eternal, separate from fears.
The all-assuming months and years
Can take no part away from this;

But Summer on the steaming floods,
And Spring that swells the narrow
 brooks,

And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,
My old affection of the tomb,
And my prime passion in the grave.

My old affection of the tomb,
A part of stillness, years to speak :
'Arise, and get thee forth and seek
A friendship for the years to come.

'I watch thee from the quiet shore ;
Thy spirit up to mine can reach ;
But in dear words of human speech
We two communicate no more.'

And I, 'Can clouds of nature stain
The starry clearness of the free ?
How is it ? Canst thou feel for me
Some painless sympathy with pain ?'

And lightly does the whisper fall :
'Tis hard for thee to fathom this ;
I triumph in conclusive bliss,
And that serene result of all.'

So hold I commerce with the dead ;
Or so methinks the dead would
say ;
Or so shall grief with symbols play
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
That these things pass, and I shall
prove
A meeting somewhere, love with
love,

I crave your pardon, O my friend ;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
I, clasping brother-hands, aver
I could not, if I would, transfer
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
The promise of the golden hours ?
First love, first friendship, equal
powers,
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
That beats within a lonely place,
That yet remembers his embrace,
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widow'd, may not
rest

Quite in the love of what is gone,
But seeks to beat in time with
one
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
The primrose of the later year,
As not unlike to that of Spring.

LXXXVI

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollst from the gorgeous
gloom

Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
'Thro' all the dewy tassell'd wood,
And shadowing down the horned
flood

In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy
breath

Throughout my frame, till Doubt
and Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
On leagues of odor streaming far,
To where in yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

LXXXVII

I past beside the reverend walls
In which of old I wore the gown ;
I roved at random thro' the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls ;

And heard once more in college
fanes

The storm their high-built organs
make,
And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophet blazon'd on the panes ;

And caught once more the distant
shout,

The measured pulse of racing oars
Among the willows ; paced the
shores

And many a bridge, and all about



'Thro' all the dewy tassell'd wood'

The same gray flats again, and felt
The same, but not the same; and last
Up that long walk of limes I past
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door.
I linger'd; all within was noise
Of songs, and clapping hands, and
boys
That crash'd the glass and beat the
floor;

Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and
art,
And labor, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
But send it slackly from the string;
And one would pierce an outer
ring,
And one an inner, here and there;

And last the master-bowman, he,
Would cleave the mark. A willing
ear
We lent him. Who but hung to
hear

The rapt oration flowing free
From point to point, with power and
grace

And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
In azure orbits heavenly-wise;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo?

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,
O, tell me where the senses mix,
O, tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate : fierce extremes employ
 Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,
 And in the midmost heart of grief
 Thy passion clasps a secret joy ;

And I—my harp would prelude woe—
 I cannot all command the strings ;
 The glory of the sum of things
 Will flash along the chords and go.

XXXXIX

Witch-elms that counterchange the
 floor
 Of this flat lawn with dusk and
 bright ;
 And thou, with all thy breadth and
 height
 Of foliage, towering sycamore ;

How often, hither wandering down,
 My Arthur found your shadows fair,
 And shook to all the liberal air
 The dust and din and steam of town ;

He brought an eye for all he saw ;
 He mixt in all our simple sports ;
 They pleased him, fresh from brawl-
 ing courts
 And dusty purlieus of the law.

O joy to him in this retreat,
 Immantled in ambrosial dark,
 To drink the cooler air, and mark
 The landscape winking thro' the
 heat !

O sound to rout the brood of cares,
 The sweep of scythe in morning
 dew,
 The gust that round the garden flew,
 And tumbled half the mellowing pears !

O bliss, when all in circle drawn
 About him, heart and ear were fed
 To hear him, as he lay and read
 The Tuscan poets on the lawn !

Or in the all-golden afternoon
 A guest, or happy sister, sung,
 Or here she brought the harp and
 flung
 A ballad to the brightening moon.

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
 Beyond the bounding hill to stray,

And break the livelong summer
 day

With banquet in the distant woods ;

Whereat we glanced from theme to
 theme,

Discuss'd the books to love or hate,
 Or touch'd the changes of the state,
 Or threaded some Socratic dream ;

But if I praised the busy town,
 He loved to rail against it still,
 For 'ground in yonder social mill
 We rub each other's angles down,

'And merge,' he said, 'in form and
 gloss

The picturesque of man and man.'
 We talk'd: the stream beneath us

ran,
 The wine-flask lying couch'd in moss,

Or cool'd within the glooming wave ;

And last, returning from afar,
 Before the crimson-circled star
 Had fallen into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
 We heard behind the woodbine veil
 The milk that bubbled in the pail,
 And buzzings of the honeyed hours.

XC

He tasted love with half his mind,
 Nor ever drank the inviolate spring
 Where highest heaven, who first
 could sing

This bitter seed among mankind :

That could the dead, whose dying
 eyes

Were closed with wail, resume their
 life,

They would but find in child and
 wife

An iron welcome when they rise.

'T was well, indeed, when warm with
 wine

To pledge them with a kindly tear,
 To talk them o'er, to wish them

here, here, here
 To count their memories half divine ;

But if they came who past away,
 Behold their brides in other hands :

The hard heir strides about their
lands,
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these,
Not less the yet-loved sire would
make
Confusion worse than death, and
shake
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah, dear, but come thou back to me!
Whatever change the years have
wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

XCI

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush,
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;

Come, wear the form by which I know
Thy spirit in time among thy peers;
The hope of unaccomplish'd years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing
change

May breathe, with many roses sweet,
Upon the thousand waves of wheat
That ripple round the lowly grange,

Come; not in watches of the night,
But where the sunbeam broodeth
warm,

Come, beauteous in thine after form,
And like a finer light in light.

XCII

If any vision should reveal
Thy likeness, I might count it vain
As but the canker of the brain;
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
Together in the days behind,
I might but say, I hear a wind
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view
A fact within the coming year;
And tho' the months revolving near,
Should prove the phantom-warning
true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,
But spiritual presentiments, ^{thy}
And such refraction of events
As often rises ere they rise.

I shall not see thee. ^{XCIH form evident} Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native land
Where first he walk'd when claspt in
clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the Spirit himself, may come
Where all the nerve of sense is numb,
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

O, therefore from thy sightless range
With gods in unconjectured bliss,
O, from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
The wish too strong for words to
name, my spirit darkens
That in this blindness of the frame
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCIV

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold
Should be the man whose thought
would hold

An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call light.
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst
say,

My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest;

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within.

V. Imp ^{the cord in the} xcv

By night we linger'd on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry;
And genial warmth; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn;

And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering: not a cricket chirr'd;
The brook alone far-off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn.

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheel'd or lit the filmy shapes
That haunt the dusk, with ermine
capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes;

While now we sang old songs that
peal'd
From knoll to knoll, where, couch'd
at ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the
trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
Withdrew themselves from me and
night,
And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart; I read
Of that glad year which once had
been,
In those fallen leaves which kept
their green,
The noble letters of the dead.

And strangely on the silence broke
The silent-speaking words, and
strange
Was love's dumb cry defying change
To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell
On doubts that drive the coward
back,
And keen thro' wordy snares to track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touch'd me from the
past,
And all at once it seem'd at last
The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and
whirl'd
About empyreal heights of thought,
And came on that which is, and
caught
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
The steps of Time—the shocks of
Chance—
The blows of Death. At length
my trance
Was cancell'd, stricken thro' with
doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to
frame

In matter-moulded forms of speech,
Or even for intellect to reach
Thro' memory that which I became;

Till now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
The knolls once more where, couch'd
at ease,

The white kine glimmer'd, and the
trees

Laid their dark arms about the field;

And suck'd from out the distant gloom
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
Rock'd the full-foliaged elms, and
swung
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said,

The dawn, the dawn, and died away;
And East and West, without a
breath,
Mixt their dim lights, like life and
death,
To broaden into boundless day.

xcvi

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-
blue eyes

Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not: one indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touch'd a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true;

Perplex in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest
doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gather'd strength,

He would not make his judgment blind, by shunning his eyes to

He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them; thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own,
And Power was with him in the night, ^{cloud} of doubt

Which makes the darkness and the light,

And dwells not in the light alone, ^{dwells}

But in the darkness and the cloud, ^{face} ^{hands}
As over Sinai's peaks of old, ^{face}

While Israel made their gods of gold,
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

My love has talk'd with rocks and trees;

He finds on misty mountain-ground
His own vast shadow glory-crown'd;
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life —
I look'd on these and thought of thee
In vastness and in mystery,
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two — they dwelt with eye on eye,

Their hearts of old have beat in tune,

Their meetings made December June.

Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never past away;

The days she never can forget
Are earnest that he loves her yet,
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart;

He loves her yet, she will not weep,
Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep

He seems to slight her simple heart.

He thrills the labyrinth of the mind,
He reads the secret of the star.

He seems so near and yet so far,
He looks so cold: she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
A wither'd violet is her bliss;

She knows not what his greatness is,
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
Of early faith and plighted vows;
She knows but matters of the house,
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixt and cannot move,
She darkly feels him great and wise!
She dwells on him with faithful eyes
'I cannot understand; I love.'

xcviii
You leave us: you will see the Rhine,
And those fair hills I sail'd below,
When I was there with him; and go
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath,
That city. All her splendor seems
No livelier than the wisp that gleams
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
Enwind her isles, unmark'd of me;
I have not seen, I will not see
Vienna; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
The birth, the bridal; friend from friend

Is oftener parted, fathers bend
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings

Her shadow on the blaze of kings.
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town
With statelier progress to and fro
The double tides of chariots flow
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves; nor more content,
He told me, lives in any crowd,
When all is gay with lamps, and loud
With sport and song, in booth and tent.

Imperial halls, or open plain;
And wheels the circled dance, and breaks

The rocket molten into flakes
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCIX

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
So loud with voices of the birds,
So thick with lowings of the herds,
Day, when I lost the flower of men;

Who tremblest thro' thy ^{dim dawn} darkling red
On yon swollen brook that bubbles
fast

By meadows breathing of the past,
And woodlands holy to the dead;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
A song that slights the coming
care, or ^{view} ~~care~~ ^{of the world} ~~of the world~~

And Autumn laying here and there
A fiery finger on the leaves;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth,
And unto myriads more, of death.

O, wheresoever those may be,
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
To-day they count as kindred souls;
They know me not, but mourn with
me. ^{me, but of daily death}

I climb the hill: from end to end,
Of all the landscape underneath,
I find no place that does not breathe
Some gracious memory of my friend;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
Or low morass and whispering
reed,

Or simple stile from mead to mead,
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
That hears the latest linnet trill,
Nor quarry trench'd along the hill
And haunted by the wrangling daw;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock;
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
To left and right thro' meadowy
curves,

That feed the mothers of the flock;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
And each reflects a kindlier day;
And, leaving these, to pass away,
I think once more he seems to die.

CI

Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall
sway,

The tender blossom flutter down,
Unloved, that beech will gather
brown,

This maple burn itself away;

Unloved, the sunflower, shining fair,
Ray round with flames her disk of
seed,

And many a rose-carnation feed
With summer spice the humming air;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down the
plain,

At noon or when the Lesser Wain
Is twisting round the polar star;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
And flood the haunts of hern and
crake, ^{crake, of the water, of the water}
Or into silver arrows break
The sailing moon in creek and cove;

Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow, ^{new, of the}
And year by year the landscape
grow

Familiar to the stranger's child;

As year by year the laborer tills
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades,
And year by year our memory fades
From all the circle of the hills.

CII

We leave the well-beloved place
Where first we gazed upon the sky;
The roofs that heard our earliest cry
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,
As down the garden-walks I move,
Two spirits of a diverse love
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, 'Here thy boyhood
sung ^{morning}
Long since its matin song, and heard
The low love-language of the bird
In native hazels ^{night} ~~tassel-rung~~

The other answers, 'Yea, but here
Thy feet have stray'd in after hours

With thy lost friend among the
bowers,
And this hath made them trebly dear.'

These two have striven half the day,
And each prefers his separate claim,
Poor rivals in a losing game,
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go; my feet are set
To leave the pleasant fields and
farms;

They mix in one another's arms
To one pure image of regret.

CIII

On that last night before we went
From out the doors where I was
bred,

I dream'd a vision of the dead,
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
And maidens with me; distant hills
From hidden summits fed with rills
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
They sang of what is wise and good
And graceful. In the centre stood
A statue veil'd, to which they sang,

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to
me.

The shape of him I loved, and love
For ever. Then flew in a dove
And brought a summons from the sea;

And when they learnt that I must go,
They wept and wail'd, but led the
way

To where a little shallop lay
At anchor in the flood below;



'You will see the Rhine,
And those fair hills I sail'd below'

And on by many a level mead,
And shadowing bluff that made the
banks,

We glided winding under ranks
Of iris and the golden reed ;

And still as vaster grew the shore
And roll'd the floods in grander
space,

The maidens gather'd strength and
grace

And presence, lordlier than before ;

And I myself, who sat apart
And watch'd them, wax'd in every
limb ;

I felt the thews of Anakim,
The pulses of a Titan's heart ;

As one would sing the death of war.
And one would chant the history
Of that great race which is to be,
And one the shaping of a star ;

Until the forward-creeping tides
Began to foam, and we to draw
From deep to deep, to where we saw
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,
But thrice as large as man he bent
To greet us. Up the side I went,
And fell in silence on his neck ;

Whereat those maidens with one mind
Bewail'd their lot ; I did them
wrong :

'We served thee here,' they said,
'so long,
And wilt thou leave us now behind ?'

So rapt I was, they could not win
An answer from my lips, but he
Replying, 'Enter likewise ye
And go with us : ' they enter'd in.

And while the wind began to sweep
A music out of sheet and shroud,
We steer'd her toward a crimson
cloud, *glory & heaven*
That landlike slept along the deep.

V V 2-22 *orv*
The time draws near the birth of
Christ ;
The moon is hid, the night is still ;

A single church below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
That wakens at this hour of rest
A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
In lands where not a memory strays,
Nor landmark breathes of other
days,

But all is new unhallow'd ground.

CV

To-night ungather'd let us leave
This laurel, let this holly stand :
We live within the stranger's land.
And strangely falls our Christmas-
eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
And silent under other snows:
There in due time the woodbine
blows,
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
The genial hour with mask and
mime ;
For change of place, like growth of
time,
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
By which our lives are chiefly
proved,
A little spare the night I loved,
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footstep beat the floor,
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm ;
For who would keep an ancient
form
Thro' which the spirit breathes no
more ?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast ;
Nor harp be touch'd, nor flute be
blown ;

No dance, no motion, save alone
What lightens in the lucid East
new worlds of hope
Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
Long sleeps the summer in the
seed :

Run out your measured arcs, and lead
The closing cycle rich in good.

CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light:
The year is dying in the night;
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times;
Ring out, ring out my mournful
rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good;
Ring out old shapes of foul disease;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kinder hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

From Feb 24 34 CVII birthday

It is the day when he was born,
A bitter day that early sank
Behind a purple-frosty bank
Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely lies
The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpen'd eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
Above the wood which grides and
clangs

Its leafless ribs and iron horns
Together, in the drifting clouds
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch
the wine,
Arrange the board and brim the glass.

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat;
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things even as he were by;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
With books and music, surely we
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVIII

I will not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind:

What profit lies in barren faith,
And vacant yearning, tho' with
might
To scale the heaven's highest height,
Or dive below the wells of death?

What find I in the highest place,
But mine own phantom chanting
hymns?
And on the depths of death there
swims

The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
Of sorrow under human skies:
'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
From household fountains never
dry;

The critic clearness of an eye
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk;

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of
man;

Impassion'd logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touch'd with no ascetic gloom;
And passion pure in snowy bloom
Thro' all the years of April blood;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England; not the schoolboy heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt;

And manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the child would twine
A trustful hand, unask'd, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes
Have look'd on: if they look'd in
vain,

My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CX

Thy converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe and riper years;
The feeble soul, a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
The proud was half disarm'd of
pride,
Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert
by, ~~the stern were mild when thou wert~~
The flippant put himself to school
And heard thee, and the brazen fool
Was soften'd, and he knew not why;

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine;
And loved thee more, that they
were thine,

The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not tire,
And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will.

id write in state July
The churl in spirit, up or down
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,

To him who grasps a golden ball,
By blood a king, at heart a clown, —

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
His want in forms for fashion's sake,
Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons thro' the gilded pale;

For who can always act? but he,
To whom a thousand memories call,
Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seem'd to be,

Best seem'd the thing he was, and join'd
Each office of the social hour
To noble manners, as the flower
And native growth of noble mind;

not assumed
Nor ever narrowness or spite,
Or villain fancy fleeting by,
Drew in the expression of an eye
Where God and Nature met in light;

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soil'd with all ignoble use.

CXII

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
That I, who gaze with temperate
eyes
On glorious insufficiencies,
Set light by narrower perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
Of all my love, art reason why
I seem to cast a careless eye
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power
Sprang up for ever at a touch, *inspired*
And hope could never hope too
much,
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,
And tracts of calm from tempest
made,
And world-wide fluctuation sway'd
In vassal tides that follow'd thought.

CXIII

inspired the Statesman
'T is held that sorrow makes us wise;
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with
thee

Which not alone had guided me,
But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt, who knew thee keen
In intellect, with force and skill
To strive, to fashion, to fulfil —
I doubt not what thou wouldst have
been:

A life in civic action warm,
A soul on highest mission sent,
A potent voice of Parliament,
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should, licensed boldness gather force,
Becoming, when the time has birth,
A lever to uplift the earth
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and
go,

With agonies, with energies,
With overthrowings, and with cries,
And undulations to and fro.

Who, loves not Knowledge? Who
shall rail

Against her beauty? May she mix
With men and prosper! Whoshall fix
Her pillars? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire;
She sets her forward countenance,
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain —
She cannot fight the fear of death.
What is she, cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of demons? fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her place;
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain, and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With Wisdom, like the younger child;

For she is earthly of the mind,
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
O friend, who camest to thy goal
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like
thee,

Who grewest not alone in power
And knowledge, but by year and
hour

In reverence and in charity.

Now fades the last long streak of
snow,

Now burgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and
thick

By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and
long,

The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drown'd in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and
lea,

The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
In yonder greening gleam, and fly
The happy birds, that change their
sky
To build and brood, that live their
lives

From land to land; and in my breast
Spring wakens too, and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

Is it, then, regret for buried time
That keenlier in sweet April wakes,
And meets the year, and gives and
takes
The colors of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,
The life re-orient out of dust,
Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine
Upon me, while I muse alone,
And that dear voice, I once have
known,
Still speak to me of me and mine.

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
For days of happy commune dead,
Less yearning for the friendship fled
Than some strong bond which is to be.

CXVII

O days and hours, your work is this,
To hold me from my proper place,
A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss;

That out of distance might ensue
Desire of nearness doubly sweet,
And unto meeting, when we meet,
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
And every span of shade that steals,
And every kiss of toothed wheels,
And all the courses of the suns.

CXVIII

Contemplate all this work of Time,
The giant laboring in his youth;
Nor dream of human love and truth,
As dying Nature's earth and lime;

But trust that those we call the dead
Are breathers of an ampler day
For ever nobler ends. They say
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
And grew to seeming-random forms,
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man;

Who throve and branch'd from clime
to clime,
The herald of a higher race,
And of himself in higher place,
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more;
Or, crown'd with attributes of woe
Like glories, move his course, and show
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipt in baths of hissing tears,
And batter'd with the shocks of doom
To shape and use. Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;

Move upward, working out the
beast,

And let the ape and tiger die.
de baser than an untrained crane

CXIX

Doors, where my heart was used to
beat

So quickly, not as one that weeps;
I come once more; the city sleeps;
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see
Betwixt the black fronts long-with-
drawn

A light-blue lane of early dawn,
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are
bland,
And bright the friendship of thine
eye;

And in my thoughts with scarce a
sigh
I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXX

I trust I have not wasted breath:
I think we are not wholly brain,
Magnetic mockeries; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with
Death;

Not only cunning casts in clay:
Let Science prove we are, and then
What matters Science unto men,
At least to me? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape
His action like the greater ape,
But I was born to other things.

CXXI

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun
And ready, thou, to die with him,
Thou watchest all things ever dim
And dimmer, and a glory done.

The team is loosen'd from the wain,
The boat is drawn upon the shore;
Thou listenest to the closing door,
And life is darken'd in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
By thee the world's great work is
heard



an allegory on a day - the first of *the first of actuality* meeting *the first* in the next world

Beginning, and the wakeful bird ;
Behind thee comes the greater light.

The market boat is on the stream,
And voices hail it from the brink ;
Thou hear'st the village hammer
clink,
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first, the last,
Thou, like my present and my
past,
Thy place is changed ; thou art the
same.

CXXII

O, wast thou with me, dearest, then,
While I rose up against my doom,
And yearn'd to burst the folded
gloom,
To bare the eternal heavens again,
To feel once more, in placid awe,
The strong imagination roll
A sphere of stars about my soul,
In all her motion one with law ?

If thou wert with me, and the grave
Divide us not, be with me now,
And enter in at breast and brow,
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,
And like an inconsiderate boy,
As in the former flash of joy,
I slip the thoughts of life and death ;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
And every dewdrop paints a bow,
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose.

CXXIII

There rolls the deep where grew the
tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou
seen !
There where the long street roars
hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing
stands ;

They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves
and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it
true;

For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

That which we dare invoke to bless;
Our dearest faith; our ghastliest
doubt;

He, They, One, All; within, with-
out;

The Power in darkness whom we
guess, —

I found Him not in world or sun,
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye,
Nor thro' the questions men may
try,

The petty cobwebs we have spun.

If e'er when faith had fallen asleep,
I heard a voice, 'believe no more,'
And heard an ever-breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep,

A warmth within the breast would
melt

The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answer'd, 'I have felt,'

No, like a child in doubt and fear:
But that blind clamor made me wise;

Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near;

And what I am ^{eternal soul} ~~believe~~ again ^{knows} ~~understands~~

What is, and no man understands;
And out of darkness came the hands
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

Whatever I have said or sung,
Some bitter notes my harp would
give,

Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth,
She did but look through dimmer
eyes;

Or Love but play'd with gracious
lies,

Because he felt ^{real friendship could do} ~~so fix'd~~ in truth;

And if the song were full of care,
He breathed the spirit of the song;
And if the words were sweet and
strong

He set his royal signet there;

Abiding with me till I sail
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

Love is and was my lord and king,
And in his presence I attend
To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my king and lord,
And will be, tho' as yet I keep
Within the court on earth, and sleep
Encompass'd by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel ^{faith} ~~hope~~
Who moves about from place to
place,

And whispers to the worlds of space,
In the deep night, that all is well.

And all is well, tho' faith and form
Be sunder'd in the night of fear;
Well roars the storm to those that
hear

A deeper voice across the storm,
Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
And justice, even tho' thrice again
The red fool-fury of the Seine
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
And him, the lazar, in his rags!

They tremble, the sustaining crags;
The spires of ice are toppled down,
And molten up, and roar in flood;

The fortress crashes from on high,
The brute earth lightens to the sky
And the great ~~Zeon~~ ^{Zeon} sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of hell;
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,

O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
And smilest, knowing all is well. *

CXXVIII

The love that rose on stronger wings,
Unpalsied when he met with Death,
Is comrade of the lesser faith
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
Of onward time shall yet be made,
And throned races may degrade;
Yet, O ye mysteries of good,

Wild Hours that fly with Hope and
Fear,

If all your office had to do with
With old results that look like new —
If this were all your mission here

To draw to sheathe a useless sword,
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
To cram the student at his desk,
To make old bareness picturesque
And tuft with grass a feudal tower,

Why, then my scorn might well descend

On you and yours. I see in part
That all, as in some piece of art,
Is toil coöperant to an end.

CXXIX

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
So far, so near in woe and weal,
O loved the most, when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown, human, divine;
Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
Dear heavenly friend that canst not
die,

Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine
Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
Loved deeper, darklier understood;
Behold, I dream a dream of good,
And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXX

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;

Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess,
But tho' I seem in star and flower
To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less.

My love involves the love before;
My love is vaster passion now;
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature
thou,

I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice
I prosper, circled with thy voice;
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXXI

O living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer
shock,

Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow thro' our deeds and make them
pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquer'd years
To one that with us works, and
trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,
Demand not thou a marriage lay;
In that it is thy marriage day
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
Since first he told me that he loved
A daughter of our house, nor proved
Since that dark day a day like this;

Tho' I since then have number'd o'er
Some thrice three years; they went
and came,
Remade the blood and changed the
frame,
And yet is love not less, but more;

No longer caring to embalm
In dying songs a dead regret,
But like a statue solid-set,
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
Than in the summers that are flown,
For I myself with these have grown
To something greater than before;

Which makes appear the songs I made
As echoes out of weaker times,
As half but idle brawling rhymes,
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
That must be made a wife ere noon?
She enters, glowing like the moon
Of Eden on its bridal bower.

On me she bends her blissful eyes
And then on thee; they meet thy look
And brighten like the star that shook
Betwixt the palms of Paradise.

O, when her life was yet in bud,
He too foretold the perfect rose.
For thee she grew, for thee she grows
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy, full of power;
As gentle; liberal-minded, great,
Consistent; wearing all that weight
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out: the noon is near,
And I must give away the bride;
She fears not, or with thee beside
And me behind her, will not fear.

For I that danced her on my knee,
That watch'd her on her nurse's arm,
That shielded all her life from harm,
At last must part with her to thee;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
Her feet, my darling, on the dead;
Their pensive tablets round her head,
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
The 'Wilt thou?' answer'd, and
again
The 'Wilt thou?' ask'd, till out of
twain
Her sweet 'I will' has made you one.

Now sign your names, which shall be
read,
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
By village eyes as yet unborn.
The names are sign'd, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
The joy to every wandering breeze;
The blind wall rocks, and on the
trees
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

O happy hour, and happier hours
Await them. Many a merry face
Salutes them — maidens of the place,
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

O happy hour, behold the bride
With him to whom her hand I gave.
They leave the porch, they pass the
grave
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
For them the light of life increased,
Who stay to share the morning feast,
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
To meet and greet a whiter sun;
My drooping memory will not shun
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
And hearts are warm'd and faces
bloom,
As drinking health to bride and
groom
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
Conjecture of a stiller guest,
Perchance, perchance, among the
rest,
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,
And those white-favor'd horses
wait;
They rise, but linger; it is late;
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
From little cloudlets on the grass,
But sweeps away as out we pass
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
 And talk of others that are wed,
 And how she look'd, and what he
 said,
 And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
 The shade of passing thought, the
 wealth
 Of words and wit, the double health,
 The crowning cup, the three-times-
 three,

And last the dance ; — till I retire.
 Dumb is that tower which spake so
 loud,
 And high in heaven the streaming
 cloud,
 And on the downs a rising fire :

And rise, O moon, from yonder down,
 Till over down and over dale
 All night the shining vapor sail
 And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing
 rills,
 And catch at every mountain head,
 And o'er the friths that branch and
 spread
 Their sleeping silver thro' the hills ;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,
 With tender gloom the roof, the
 wall.

And breaking let the splendor fall
 To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
 And, star and system rolling past,
 A soul shall draw from out the vast
 And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,
 Result in man, be born and think,
 And act and love, a closer link
 Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
 On knowledge ; under whose com-
 mand

Is Earth and Earth's, and in their
 hand
 Is Nature like an open book ;

No longer half-akin to brute,
 For all we thought and loved and
 did,
 And hoped, and suffer'd, is but seed
 Of what in them is flower and fruit ;

Whereof the man that with me trod
 This planet was a noble type
 Appearing ere the times were ripe,
 That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,
 One God, one law, one element,
 And one far-off divine event,
 To which the whole creation moves.



‘ I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood ’

MAUD AND OTHER POEMS

MAUD ; A MONODRAMA

PART I

I

I

I HATE the dreadful hollow behind
the little wood ;
Its lips in the field above are dabbled
with blood-red heath.
The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent
horror of blood,
And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her,
answers ‘ Death.’

II

For there in the ghastly pit long since
a body was found,
His who had given me life — O father !
O God ! was it well ? —
Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd,
and dinted into the ground ;
There yet lies the rock that fell with
him when he fell.

III

Did he fling himself down ? who
knows ? for a vast speculation
had fall'd,

And ever he mutter'd and madden'd,
and ever wann'd with despair, 10
And out he walk'd when the wind like
a broken worldling wail'd,
And the flying gold of the ruin'd wood-
lands drove thro' the air.

IV

I remember the time, for the roots of
my hair were stirr'd
By a shuffled step, by a dead weight
trail'd, by a whisper'd fright,
And my pulses closed their gates with
a shock on my heart as I heard
The shrill-edged shriek of a mother
divide the shuddering night.

V

Villainy somewhere! whose? One
says, we are villains all.
Not he; his honest fame should at least
by me be maintained;
But that old man, now lord of the
broad estate and the Hall,
Dropt off gorged from a scheme that
had left us flaccid and drain'd. 20

VI

Why do they prate of the blessings of
peace? we have made them a
curse,
Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all
that is not its own;
And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain,
is it better or worse
Than the heart of the citizen hissing
in war on his own hearthstone?

VII

But these are the days of advance, the
works of the men of mind,
When who but a fool would have faith
in a tradesman's ware or his
word?
Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I
think, and that of a kind
The viler, as underhand, not openly
bearing the sword.

VIII

Sooner or later I too may passively
take the print
Of the golden age — why not? I have
neither hope nor trust; 30
May make my heart as a millstone, set
my face as a flint,

Cheat and be cheated, and die — who
knows? we are ashes and dust.

IX

Peace sitting under her olive, and
slurring the days gone by,
When the poor are hovell'd and hus-
tled together, each sex, like
swine,
When only the ledger lives, and when
only not all men lie;
Peace in her vineyard — yes! — but a
company forges the wine.

X

And the vitriol madness flushes up in
the ruffian's head,
Till the filthy by-lane rings to the yell
of the trampled wife,
And chalk and alum and plaster are
sold to the poor for bread,
And the spirit of murder works in the
very means of life, 40

XI

And Sleep must lie down arm'd, for
the villainous centre-bits
Grind on the wakeful ear in the hush
of the moonless nights,
While another is cheating the sick of
a few last gasps, as he sits
'To pestle a poison'd poison behind his
crimson lights.

XII

When a Mammonite mother kills her
babe for a burial fee,
And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile
of children's bones,
Is it peace or war? better, war! loud
war by land and by sea,
War with a thousand battles, and shak-
ing a hundred thrones!

XIII

For I trust if an enemy's fleet came
yonder round by the hill,
And the rushing battle-bolt sang from
the three-decker out of the
foam, 50
That the smooth-faced, snub-nosed
rogue would leap from his
counter and till,
And strike, if he could, were it but
with his cheating yardwand,
home. —

XIV

What ! am I raging alone as my father
 raged in his mood ?
 Must I too creep to the hollow and
 dash myself down and die
 Rather than hold by the law that I
 made, nevermore to brood
 On a horror of shatter'd limbs and a
 wretched swindler's lie ?

XV

Would there be sorrow for *me* ? there
 was *love* in the passionate shriek,
 Love for the silent thing that had made
 false haste to the grave —
 Wrapt in a cloak, as I saw him, and
 thought he would rise and speak
 And rave at the lie and the liar, ah
 God, as he used to rave. 60

XVI

I am sick of the Hall and the hill,
 I am sick of the moor and the
 main.
 Why should I stay ? can a sweeter
 chance ever come to me here ?
 O, having the nerves of motion as
 well as the nerves of pain,
 Were it not wise if I fled from the
 place and the pit and the fear ?

XVII

Workmen up at the Hall ! — they are
 coming back from abroad ;
 The dark old place will be gilt by the
 touch of a millionaire.
 I have heard, I know not whence, of
 the singular beauty of Maud ;
 I play'd with the girl when a child ;
 she promised then to be fair.

XVIII

Maud, with her venturous climbings
 and tumbles and childish es-
 capes,
 Maud, the delight of the village, the
 ringing joy of the Hall, 70
 Maud, with her sweet purse-mouth
 when my father dangled the
 grapes,
 Maud, the beloved of my mother, the
 moon-faced darling of all, —

XIX

What is she now ? My dreams are bad.
 She may bring me a curse.

No, there is fatter game on the moor ;
 she will let me alone.
 Thanks ; for the fiend best knows
 whether woman or man be the
 worse.
 I will bury myself in myself, and the
 Devil may pipe to his own.

II

Long have I sigh'd for a calm ;
 God grant I may find it at
 last !
 It will never be broken by Maud ; she
 has neither savor nor salt,
 But a cold and clear-cut face, as I
 found when her carriage past,
 Perfectly beautiful ; let it be granted
 her ; where is the fault ? 80
 All that I saw — for her eyes were
 downcast, not to be seen —
 Faultily faultless, icily regular, splen-
 didly null,
 Dead perfection, no more ; nothing
 more, if it had not been
 For a chance of travel, a paleness, an
 hour's defect of the rose,
 Or an underlip, you may call it a little
 too ripe, too full,
 Or the least little delicate aquiline
 curve in a sensitive nose,
 From which I escaped heart-free, with
 the least little touch of spleen.

III

Cold and clear-cut face, why come you
 so cruelly meek,
 Breaking a slumber in which all
 spleenful folly was drown'd ?
 Pale with the golden beam of an eye-
 lash dead on the cheek, 90
 Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet
 on a gloom profound ;
 Womanlike, taking revenge too deep
 for a transient wrong
 Done but in thought to your beauty,
 and ever as pale as before
 Growing and fading and growing
 upon me without a sound,
 Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, death-
 like, half the night long
 Growing and fading and growing, till
 I could bear it no more,

But arose, and all by myself in my
own dark garden ground,
Listening now to the tide in its broad-
flung shipwrecking roar,
Now to the scream of a madden'd
beach dragg'd down by the
wave,
Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly
glimmer, and found¹⁰⁰
The shining daffodil dead, and Orion
low in his grave.

IV

I

A million emeralds break from the
ruby-budded line
In the little grove where I sit — ah,
wherefore cannot I be
Like things of the season gay, like the
bountiful season bland,
When the far-off sail is blown by the
breeze of a softer clime,
Half-lost in the liquid azure bloom of
a crescent of sea,
The silent sapphire-spangled marriage
ring of the land ?

II

Below me, there, is the village, and
looks how quiet and small !
And yet bubbles o'er like a city, with
gossip, scandal, and spite ;
And Jack on his ale-house bench has
as many lies as a Czar ;¹¹⁰
And here on the landward side,
by a red rock, glimmers the
Hall ;
And up in the high Hall-garden I see
her pass like a light ;
But sorrow seize me if ever that light
be my leading star !

III

When have I bow'd to her father, the
wrinkled head of the race ?
I met her to-day with her brother, but
not to her brother I bow'd ;
I bow'd to his lady-sister as she rode
by on the moor,
But the fire of a foolish pride flash'd
over her beautiful face.
O child, you wrong your beauty, be-
lieve it, in being so proud ;
Your father has wealth well-gotten,
and I am nameless and poor.

IV

I keep but a man and a maid, ever
ready to slander and steal ;¹²⁰
I know it, and smile a hard-set smile,
like a stoic, or like
A wiser epicurean, and let the world
have its way
For nature is one with rapine, a harm
no preacher can heal ;
The Mayfly is torn by the swallow,
the sparrow spear'd by the
shrike,
And the whole little world where I sit
is a world of plunder and prey.

V

We are puppets, Man in his pride,
and Beauty fair in her flower ;
Do we move ourselves, or are moved
by an unseen hand at a game
That pushes us off from the board,
and others ever succeed ?
Ah yet, we cannot be kind to each
other here for an hour ;
We whisper, and hint, and chuckle,
and grin at a brother's shame ;
However we brave it out, we men are
a little breed.¹³¹

VI

A monstrous eft was of old the lord
and master of earth,
For him did his high sun flame, and
his river billowing ran,
And he felt himself in his force to be
Nature's crowning race.
As nine months go to the shaping an
infant ripe for his birth,
So many a million of ages have gone
to the making of man :
He now is first, but is he the last ? is
he not too base ?

VII

The man of science himself is fonder
of glory, and vain,
An eye well-practised in nature, a
spirit bounded and poor ;
The passionate heart of the poet is
whirl'd into folly and vice.¹⁴⁰
I would not marvel at either, but keep
a temperate brain ;
For not to desire or admire, if a man
could learn it, were more
Than to walk all day like the sultan
of old in a garden of spice.

VIII

For the drift of the Maker is dark, an
 Isis hid by the veil.
 Who knows the ways of the world,
 how God will bring them
 about?
 Our planet is one, the suns are many,
 the world is wide.
 Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I
 shriek if a Hungary fail?
 Or an infant civilization be ruled with
 rod or with knout?
 I have not made the world, and He
 that made it will guide.

IX

Be mine a philosopher's life in the
 quiet woodland ways, ¹⁵⁰
 Where if I cannot be gay let a pas-
 sionless peace be my lot,
 Far-off from the clamor of liars belied
 in the hubbub of lies;
 From the long-neck'd geese of the
 world that are ever hissing dis-
 praise
 Because their natures are little, and,
 whether he heed it or not,
 Where each man walks with his head
 in a cloud of poisonous flies.

X

And most of all would I flee from the
 cruel madness of love,
 The honey of poison-flowers and all
 the measureless ill.
 Ah, Maud, you milk-white fawn, you
 are all unmeet for a wife.
 Your mother is mute in her grave as
 her image in marble above;
 Your father is ever in London, you
 wander about at your will; ¹⁶⁰
 You have but fed on the roses and
 lain in the lilies of life.

V

I

A voice by the cedar tree
 In the meadow under the Hall!
 She is singing an air that is known to
 me,
 A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
 A martial song like a trumpet's call!
 Singing alone in the morning of life,
 In the happy morning of life and of
 May,

Singing of men that in battle array,
 Ready in heart and ready in hand, ¹⁷⁰
 March with banner and bugle and
 fife
 To the death, for their native land.

II

Maud with her exquisite face,
 And wild voice pealing up to the
 sunny sky,
 And feet like sunny gems on an Eng-
 lish green,
 Maud in the light of her youth and
 her grace,
 Singing of Death, and of Honor that
 cannot die,
 Till I well could weep for a time so
 sordid and mean,
 And myself so languid and base.

III

Silence, beautiful voice! ¹⁸⁰
 Be still, for you only trouble the
 mind
 With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
 A glory I shall not find.
 Still! I will hear you no more,
 For your sweetness hardly leaves me
 a choice
 But to move to the meadow and fall
 before
 Her feet on the meadow grass, and
 adore,
 Not her, who is neither courtly nor
 kind,
 Not her, not her, but a voice.

VI

I

Morning arises stormy and pale, ¹⁹⁰
 No sun, but a wannish glare
 In fold upon fold of hueless cloud;
 And the budded peaks of the wood
 are bow'd,
 Caught, and cuff'd by the gale:
 I had fancied it would be fair.

II

Whom but Maud should I meet
 Last night, when the sunset burn'd
 On the blossom'd gable-ends
 At the head of the village street,
 Whom but Maud should I meet? ²⁰⁰
 And she touch'd my hand with a smile
 so sweet,

She made me divine amends
For a courtesy not return'd.

III

And thus a delicate spark
Of glowing and growing light
Thro' the livelong hours of the dark
Kept itself warm in the heart of my
dreams,
Ready to burst in a color'd flame;
Till at last, when the morning came
In a cloud, it faded, and seems 210
But an ashen-gray delight.

IV

What if with her sunny hair,
And smile as sunny as cold,
She meant to weave me a snare
Of some coquettish deceit,
Cleopatra-like as of old
To entangle me when we met,
To have her lion roll in a silken net
And fawn at a victor's feet.

V

Ah, what shall I be at fifty 220
Should Nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five?
Yet, if she were not a cheat,
If Maud were all that she seem'd,
And her smile were all that I dream'd,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

VI

What if, tho' her eye seem'd full
Of a kind intent to me, 230
What if that dandy-despot, he,
That jewell'd mass of millinery,
That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian bull
Smelling of musk and of insolence,
Her brother, from whom I keep
aloof,
Who wants the finer politic sense
To mask, tho' but in his own behoof,
With a glassy smile his brutal scorn—
What if he had told her yesternorn
How prettily for his own sweet
sake 240
A face of tenderness might be feign'd,
And a moist mirage in desert eyes,
That so, when the rotten hustings
shake
In another month to his brazen lies,
A wretched vote may be gain'd?

VII

For a raven ever croaks, at my
side,
Keep watch and ward, keep watch
and ward,
Or thou wilt prove their tool.
Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,
For often a man's own angry pride 250
Is cap and bells for a fool.

VIII

Perhaps the smile and tender tone
Came out of her pitying womanhood,
For am I not, am I not, here alone
So many a summer since she died,
My mother, who was so gentle and
good?
Living alone in an empty house,
Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,
Where I hear the dead at midday
moan,
And the shrieking rush of the wain-
scot mouse, 260
And my own sad name in corners
cried,
When the shiver of dancing leaves is
thrown
About its echoing chambers wide,
Till a morbid hate and horror have
grown
Of a world in which I have hardly
mixt,
And a morbid eating lichen fixt
On a heart half-turn'd to stone.

IX

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and
caught
By that you swore to withstand?
For what was it else within me
wrought 270
But, I fear, the new strong wine of
love,
That made my tongue to stammer and
trip
When I saw the treasured splendor,
her hand,
Come sliding out of her sacred glove,
And the sunlight broke from her lip?

X

I have play'd with her when a
child;
She remembers it now we meet.
Ah, well, well, well, I *may* be beguiled
By some coquettish deceit.

Yet, if she were not a cheat, ²⁸⁰
 If Maud were all that she seem'd,
 And her smile had all that I dream'd,
 Then the world were not so bitter
 But a smile could make it sweet.

VII

I
 Did I hear it half in a doze
 Long since, I know not where ?
 Did I dream it an hour ago,
 When asleep in this arm-chair ?

II

Men were drinking together,
 Drinking and talking of me : ²⁹⁰
 'Well, if it prove a girl, the boy
 Will have plenty ; so let it be.'

III

Is it an echo of something
 Read with a boy's delight,
 Viziers nodding together
 In some Arabian night ?

IV

Strange, that I hear two men,
 Somewhere, talking of me :
 'Well, if it prove a girl, my boy
 Will have plenty ; so let it be.' ³⁰⁰

VIII

She came to the village church,
 And sat by a pillar alone ;
 An angel watching an urn
 Wept over her, carved in stone ;
 And once, but once, she lifted her
 eyes,
 And suddenly, sweetly, strangely
 blush'd
 To find they were met by my own ;
 And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat
 stronger
 And thicker, until I heard no longer
 The snowy-banded, dilettante, ³¹⁰
 Delicate-handed priest intone ;
 And thought, is it pride ? and mused
 and sigh'd,
 'No surely, now it cannot be pride.'

IX

I was walking a mile,
 More than a mile from the shore,

The sun look'd out with a smile
 Betwixt the cloud and the moor :
 And riding at set of day
 Over the dark moor land,
 Rapidly riding far away, ³²⁰
 She waved to me with her hand.
 There were two at her side,
 Something flash'd in the sun,
 Down by the hill I saw them ride,
 In a moment they were gone ;
 Like a sudden spark
 Struck vainly in the night,
 Then returns the dark
 With no more hope of light.

X

I

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread ? ³³⁰
 Was not one of the two at her side
 This new-made lord, whose splendor
 plucks
 The slavish hat from the villager's
 head ?
 Whose old grandfather has lately died,
 Gone to a blacker pit, for whom
 Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks
 And laying his trams in a poison'd
 gloom
 Wrought, till he crept from a gutted
 mine
 Master of half a servile shire, ³³⁹
 And left his coal all turn'd into gold
 To a grandson, first of his noble line,
 Rich in the grace all women desire,
 Strong in the power that all men
 adore,
 And simper and set their voices lower,
 And soften as if to a girl, and hold
 Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,
 Seeing his gewgaw castle shine,
 New as his title, built last year,
 There amid perky larches and pine,
 And over the sullen-purple moor — ³⁵⁰
 Look at it — pricking a cockney ear.

II

What, has he found my jewel out ?
 For one of the two that rode at her side
 Bound for the Hall, I am sure was
 he ;
 Bound for the Hall, and I think for a
 bride.
 Blithe would her brother's acceptance
 be.
 Maud could be gracious too, no doubt.



'She came to the village church,
And sat by a pillar alone'

To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,
A bought commission, a waxen face,
A rabbit mouth that is ever agape —
Bought ? what is it he cannot buy ? 361
And therefore splenetic, personal, base,
A wounded thing with a rancorous
cry,
At war with myself and a wretched
race,
Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I.

III

Last week came one to the county
town,
To preach our poor little army down,
And play the game of the despot
kings,

Tho' the state has done it and thrice
as well.
This broad-brimm'd hawk of holy
things, 370
Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton,
and rings
Even in dreams to the chink of his
pence,
This huckster put down war ! can he
tell
Whether war be a cause or a conse-
quence ?
Put down the passions that make earth
hell !
Down with ambition, avarice, pride,
Jealousy, down ! cut off from the mind
The bitter springs of anger and fear !

Down too, down at your own fireside,
With the evil tongue and the evil
ear,
For each is at war with mankind! ³⁸⁰

IV

I wish I could hear again
The chivalrous battle-song
That she warbled alone in her joy!
I might persuade myself then
She would not do herself this great
wrong,
To take a wanton dissolute boy
For a man and leader of men.

V

Ah God, for a man with heart, head,
hand,
Like some of the simple great ones
gone ³⁹⁰
For ever and ever by,
One still strong man in a blatant land,
Whatever they call him — what care
I? —
Aristocrat, democrat, autocrat — one
Who can rule and dare not lie!

VI

And ah for a man to arise in me,
That the man I am may cease to be!

XI

I

O, let the solid ground
Not fail beneath my feet
Before my life has found ⁴⁰⁰
What some have found so sweet!
Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day.

II

Let the sweet heavens endure,
Not close and darken above me
Before I am quite quite sure
That there is one to love me!
Then let come what come may
To a life that has been so sad, ⁴¹⁰
I shall have had my day.

XII

I

Birds in the high Hall-garden
When twilight was falling,

Maud, Maud, Maud, Maud,
They were crying and calling.

II

Where was Maud? in our wood;
And I — who else? — was with
her,
Gathering woodland lilies,
Myriads blow together.

III

Birds in our wood sang ⁴²⁰
Ringing thro' the valleys,
Maud is here, here, here
In among the lilies.

IV

I kiss'd her slender hand,
She took the kiss sedately;
Maud is not seventeen,
But she is tall and stately.

V

I to cry out on pride
Who have won her favor!
O, Maud were sure of heaven ⁴³⁰
If lowliness could save her!

VI

I know the way she went
Home with her maiden posy,
For her feet have touch'd the mea-
dows
And left the daisies rosy.

VII

Birds in the high Hall-garden
Were crying and calling to her,
Where is Maud, Maud, Maud?
One is come to woo her.

VIII

Look, a horse at the door, ⁴⁴⁰
And little King Charley snarl-
ing!
Go back, my lord, across the moor.
You are not her darling.

XIII

I

Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I
scorn,
Is that a matter to make me fret?
That a calamity hard to be borne?
Well, he may live to hate me yet.

Fool that I am to be vext with his
pride!

I past him, I was crossing his lands ;
He stood on the path a little aside ; 450
His face, as I grant, in spite of spite,
Has a broad-blown comeliness, red and
white,
And six feet two, as I think, he stands ;
But his essences turn'd the live air
sick,
And barbarous opulence jewel-thick
Sunn'd itself on his breast and his
hands.

II

Who shall call me ungente, unfair ?
I long'd so heartily then and there
To give him the grasp of fellowship ;
But while I past he was humming an
air, 460
Stopt, and then with a riding-whip
Leisurely tapping a glossy boot,
And curving a contumelious lip,
Gorgonized me from head to foot
With a stony British stare.

III

Why sits he here in his father's chair ?
That old man never comes to his place ;
Shall I believe him ashamed to be
seen ?
For only once, in the village street,
Last year, I caught a glimpse of his
face, 470
A gray old wolf and a lean.
Scarcely, now, would I call him a
cheat ;
For then, perhaps, as a child of deceit,
She might by a true descent be un-
true ;
And Maud is as true as Maud is sweet,
Tho' I fancy her sweetness only due
To the sweeter blood by the other side ;
Her mother has been a thing complete,
However she came to be so allied.
And fair without, faithful within, 480
Maud to him is nothing akin.
Some peculiar mystic grace
Made her only the child of her mother,
And heap'd the whole inherited sin
On that huge scapegoat of the race,
All, all upon the brother.

IV

Peace, angry spirit, and let him be !
Has not his sister smiled on me ?

XIV

I

Maud has a garden of roses
And lilies fair on a lawn ; 490
There she walks in her state
And tends upon bed and bower,
And thither I climb'd at dawn
And stood by her garden-gate.
A lion ramps at the top,
He is claspt by a passion-flower.

II

Maud's own little oak-room —
Which Maud, like a precious stone
Set in the heart of the carven gloom,
Lights with herself, when alone 500
She sits by her music and books
And her brother lingers late
With a roystering company — looks
Upon Maud's own garden-gate ;
And I thought as I stood, if a hand, as
white
As ocean-foam in the moon, were laid
On the hasp of the window, and my
Delight
Had a sudden desire, like a glorious
ghost, to glide,
Like a beam of the seventh heaven,
down to my side,
There were but a step to be made. 510

III

The fancy flatter'd my mind,
And again seem'd overbold ;
Now I thought that she cared for
me,
Now I thought she was kind
Only because she was cold.

IV

I heard no sound where I stood
But the rivulet on from the lawn
Running down to my own dark wood,
Or the voice of the long sea-wave as
it swell'd
Now and then in the dim-gray dawn ;
But I look'd, and round, all round the
house I beheld 521
The death-white curtain drawn,
Felt a horror over me creep,
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,
Knew that the death-white curtain
meant but sleep,
Yet I shudder'd and thought like a
fool of the sleep of death.

XV

So dark a mind within me dwells,
 And I make myself such evil cheer,
 That if I be dear to some one else,
 Then some one else may have much
 to fear; 530
 But if I be dear to some one else,
 Then I should be to myself more
 dear.
 Shall I not take care of all that I
 think,
 Yea, even of wretched meat and drink,
 If I be dear,
 If I be dear to some one else?

XVI

I

This lump of earth has left his estate
 The lighter by the loss of his weight;
 And so that he find what he went to
 seek,
 And fulsome pleasure clog him, and
 drown 540
 His heart in the gross mud-honey of
 town,
 He may stay for a year who has gone
 for a week.
 But this is the day when I must
 speak,
 And I see my Oread coming down,
 O, this is the day!
 O beautiful creature, what am I
 That I dare to look her way?
 Think I may hold dominion sweet,
 Lord of the pulse that is lord of her
 breast,
 And dream of her beauty with tender
 dread. 550
 From the delicate Arab arch of her
 feet
 To the grace that, bright and light as
 the crest
 Of a peacock, sits on her shining head,
 And she knows it not—O, if she
 knew it,
 To know her beauty might half undo
 it!
 I know it the one bright thing to
 save
 My yet young life in the wilds of
 Time,
 Perhaps from madness, perhaps from
 crime,
 Perhaps from a selfish grave.

II

What, if she be fasten'd to this fool
 lord, 560
 Dare I bid her abide by her word?
 Should I love her so well if she
 Had given her word to a thing so low?
 Shall I love her as well if she
 Can break her word were it even for
 me?
 I trust that it is not so.

III

Catch not my breath, O clamorous
 heart,
 Let not my tongue be a thrall to my
 eye.
 For I must tell her before we part,
 I must tell her, or die. 570

XVII

Go not, happy day,
 From the shining fields,
 Go not, happy day,
 Till the maiden yields,
 Rosy is the West,
 'Rosy is the South,
 Roses are her cheeks,
 And a rose her mouth.
 When the happy Yes
 Falters from her lips, 580
 Pass and blush the news
 Over glowing ships;
 Over blowing seas,
 Over seas at rest,
 Pass the happy news,
 Blush it thro' the West;
 Till the red man dance
 By his red cedar-tree,
 And the red man's babe
 Leap, beyond the sea. 590
 Blush from West to East,
 Blush from East to West,
 Till the West is East,
 Blush it thro' the West.
 Rosy is the West,
 Rosy is the South,
 Roses are her cheeks,
 And a rose her mouth.

XVIII

I

I have led her home, my love, my
 only friend.
 There is none like her, none. 600

And never yet so warmly ran my
blood
And sweetly, on and on
Calming itself to the long-wish'd-for
end,
Full to the banks, close on the pro-
mised good.

II

None like her, none.
Just now the dry-tongued laurels' pat-
tering talk
Seem'd her light foot along the garden
walk,
And shook my heart to think she
comes once more.
But even then I heard her close the
door;
The gates of heaven are closed, and
she is gone. 610

III

There is none like her, none,
Nor will be when our summers have
deceased.
O, art thou sighing for Lebanon
In the long breeze that streams to thy
delicious East,
Sighing for Lebanon,
Dark cedar, tho' thy limbs have here
increased,
Upon a pastoral slope as fair,
And looking to the South and fed
With honey'd rain and delicate air,
And haunted by the starry head 620
Of her whose gentle will has changed
my fate,
And made my life a perfumed altar-
flame;
And over whom thy darkness must
have spread
With such delight as theirs of old, thy
great
Forefathers of the thornless garden,
there
Shadowing the snow-limb'd Eve from
whom she came?

IV

Here will I lie, while these long
branches sway,
And you fair stars that crown a happy
day
Go in and out as if at merry play,
Who am no more so all forlorn 630
As when it seem'd far better to be born

To labor and the mattock-harden'd
hand
Than nursed at ease and brought to
understand
A sad astrology, the boundless plan
That makes you tyrants in your iron
skies,
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
Cold fires, yet with power to burn and
brand
His nothingness into man.

V

But now shine on, and what care I,
Who in this stormy gulf have found
a pearl 640
The countercharm of space and hollow
sky,
And do accept my madness, and would
die
To save from some slight shame one
simple girl?—

VI

Would die, for sullen-seeming Death
may give
More life to Love than is or ever
was
In our low world, where yet 't is sweet
to live.
Let no one ask me how it came to
pass;
It seems that I am happy, that to
me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the
grass, 649
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

VII

Not die, but live a life of truest
breath,
And teach true life to fight with mor-
tal wrongs.
O, why should Love, like men in
drinking-songs,
Spice his fair banquet with the dust
of death?
Make answer, Maud my bliss,
Maud made my Maud by that long
loving kiss,
Life of my life, wilt thou not answer
this?
'The dusky strand of Death inwoven
here
With dear Love's tie, makes Love
himself more dear.'

VIII

Is that enchanted moan only the swell
Of the long waves that roll in yonder
bay ? 661

And hark the clock within, the silver
knell

Of twelve sweet hours that past in
bridal white,

And died to live, long as my pulses
play ;

But now by this my love has closed
her sight

And given false death her hand, and
stolen away

To dreamful wastes where footless
fancies dwell

Among the fragments of the golden
day.

May nothing there her maiden grace
affright !

Dear heart, I feel with thee the drowsy
spell. 670

My bride to be, my evermore delight,
My own heart's heart, my ownest own,
farewell ;

It is but for a little space I go.
And ye meanwhile far over moor and
fell

Beat to the noiseless music of the night !
Has our whole earth gone nearer to
the glow

Of your soft splendors that you look
so bright ?

I have climb'd nearer out of lonely
hell.

Beat, happy stars, timing with things
below,

Beat with my heart more blest than
heart can tell, 680

Blest, but for some dark undercurrent
woe

That seems to draw — but it shall not
be so ;

Let all be well, be well.

XIX

I

Her brother is coming back to-night,
Breaking up my dream of delight.

II

My dream ? do I dream of bliss ?
I have walk'd awake with Truth.
O, when did a morning shine
So rich in atonement as this

For my dark-dawning youth, 690
Darken'd watching a mother decline
And that dead man at her heart and
mine ;

For who was left to watch her but I ?
Yet so did I let my freshness die.

III

I trust that I did not talk
To gentle Maud in our walk —
For often in lonely wanderings
I have cursed him even to lifeless
things —

But I trust that I did not talk,
Not touch on her father's sin. 700

I am sure I did but speak
Of my mother's faded cheek

When it slowly grew so thin
That I felt she was slowly dying

Vext with lawyers and harass'd with
debt ;

For how often I caught her with eyes
all wet,

Shaking her head at her son and sigh-
ing

A world of trouble within !

IV

And Maud too, Maud was moved
To speak of the mother she loved 710

As one scarce less forlorn,
Dying abroad and it seems apart

From him who had ceased to share
her heart,

And ever mourning over the feud,
The household Fury sprinkled with
blood

By which our houses are torn.
How strange was what she said,

When only Maud and the brother
Hung over her dying bed —

That Maud's dark father and mine 720
Had bound us one to the other,

Betrothed us over their wine,
On the day when Maud was born ;

Seal'd her mine from her first sweet
breath !

Mine, mine by a right, from birth till
death !

Mine, mine — our fathers have sworn !

V

But the true blood spilt had in it a heat
To dissolve the precious seal on a bond,
That, if left uncancell'd, had been so
sweet ;

And none of us thought of a something
beyond, 730
A desire that awoke in the heart of
the child,
As it were a duty done to the
tomb,
To be friends for her sake, to be rec-
onciled;
And I was cursing them and my
doom,
And letting a dangerous thought run
wild
While often abroad in the fragrant
gloom
Of foreign churches — I see her there,
Bright English lily, breathing a prayer
To be friends, to be reconciled!

VII

But then what a flint is he! 740
Abroad, at Florence, at Rome,
I find whenever she touch'd on me
This brother had laugh'd her down,
And at last, when each came home,
He had darken'd into a frown,
Chid her, and forbid her to speak
To me, her friend of the years be-
fore;
And this was what had redden'd her
cheek
When I bow'd to her on the moor.

VII

Yet Maud, altho' not blind 750
To the faults of his heart and mind,
I see she cannot but love him,
And says he is rough but kind,
And wishes me to approve him,
And tells me, when she lay
Sick once, with a fear of worse,
That he left his wine and horses and
play,
Sat with her, read to her, night and
day,
And tended her like a nurse.

VIII

Kind? but the death-bed desire 760
Spurn'd by this heir of the liar —
Rough but kind? yet I know
He has plotted against me in this,
That he plots against me still.
Kind to Maud? that were not amiss.
Well, rough but kind; why, let it be
so,
For shall not Maud have her will?

IX

For, Maud, so tender and true,
As long as my life endures
I feel I shall owe you a debt 770
That I never can hope to pay;
And if ever I should forget
That I owe this debt to you
And for your sweet sake to yours,
O, then, what then shall I say? —
If ever I *should* forget,
May God make me more wretched
Than ever I have been yet!

X

So now I have sworn to bury
All this dead body of hate, 780
I feel so free and so clear
By the loss of that dead weight,
That I should grow light-headed, I
fear,
Fantastically merry,
But that her brother comes, like a
blight
On my fresh hope, to the Hall to-night.

XX

I

Strange, that I felt so gay,
Strange, that I tried to-day
To beguile her melancholy;
The Sultan, as we name him — 790
She did not wish to blame him —
But he vexed her and perplexed her
With his worldly talk and folly.
Was it gentle to reprove her
For stealing out of view
From a little lazy lover
Who but claims her as his due?
Or for chilling his caresses
By the coldness of her manners,
Nay, the plainness of her dresses? 800
Now I know her but in two,
Nor can pronounce upon it
If one should ask me whether
The habit, hat, and feather,
Or the frock and gipsy bonnet
Be the neater and completer;
For nothing can be sweeter
Than maiden Maud in either.

II

But to-morrow, if we live,
Our ponderous squire will give 810
A grand political dinner
To half the squirlings near;

And Maud will wear her jewels,
And the bird of prey will hover,
And the titmouse hope to win her
With his chirrup at her ear.

III

A grand political dinner
To the men of many acres,
A gathering of the Tory,
A dinner and then a dance 820
For the maids and marriage-makers,
And every eye but mine will glance
At Maud in all her glory.

IV

For I am not invited,
But, with the Sultan's pardon,
I am all as well delighted,
For I know her own rose-garden,
And mean to linger in it
Till the dancing will be over ;
And then, O, then, come out to me 830
For a minute, but for a minute,
Come out to your own true lover,
That your true lover may see
Your glory also, and render
All homage to his own darling,
Queen Maud in all her splendor.

XXI

Rivulet crossing my ground,
And bringing me down from the
Hall
This garden-rose that I found,
Forgetful of Maud and me, 840
And lost in trouble and moving round
Here at the head of a tinkling fall,
And trying to pass to the sea ;
O rivulet, born at the Hall,
My Maud has sent it by thee —
If I read her sweet will right —
On a blushing mission to me,
Saying in odor and color, 'Ah, be
Among the roses to-night.'

XXII

I

Come into the garden, Maud, 850
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone ;
And the woodbine spices are wafted
abroad,
And the musk of the rose is blown.

II

For a breeze of morning moves,
And the planet of Love is on high,
Beginning to faint in the light that
she loves
On a bed of daffodil sky,
To faint in the light of the sun she
loves, 860
To faint in his light, and to die.

III

All night have the roses heard
The flute, violin, bassoon ;
All night has the casement jessamine
stirr'd
To the dancers dancing in tune ;
Till a silence fell with the waking bird,
And a hush with the setting moon.

IV

I said to the lily, 'There is but one,
With whom she has heart to be
gay.
When will the dancers leave her alone ?
She is weary of dance and play.' 871
Now half to the setting moon are gone,
And half to the rising day ;
Low on the sand and loud on the stone
The last wheel echoes away.

V

I said to the rose, 'The brief night goes
In babble and revel and wine.
O young lord-lover, what sighs are
those,
For one that will never be thine ?
But mine, but mine,' so I sware to
the rose, 880
'For ever and ever, mine.'

VI

And the soul of the rose went into my
blood,
As the music clash'd in the hall ;
And long by the garden lake I stood,
For I heard your rivulet fall
From the lake to the meadow and on
to the wood,
Our wood, that is dearer than all ;

VII

From the meadow your walks have
left so sweet
That whenever a March-wind sighs
He sets the jewel-print of your feet
In violets blue as your eyes, 891

To the woody hollows in which we
meet
And the valleys of Paradise.

VIII

The slender acacia would not shake
One long milk-bloom on the tree ;
The white lake-blossom fell into the
lake
As the pimpernel dozed on the lea ;
But the rose was awake all night for
your sake,
Knowing your promise to me ;
The lilies and roses were all awake, 900
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee.

IX

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of
girls,
Come hither, the dances are done,
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,
Queen lily and rose in one ;
Shine out, little head, sunning over
with curls,
To the flowers, and be their sun.

X

There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the
gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear ; 910
She is coming, my life, my fate.
The red rose cries, 'She is near, she
is near ;'
And the white rose weeps, 'She is
late ;'
The larkspur listens, 'I hear, I
hear ;'
And the lily whispers, 'I wait.'

XI

She is coming, my own, my sweet ;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed ;
My dust would hear her and beat, 920
Had I lain for a century dead,
Would start and tremble under her
feet,
And blossom in purple and red.



'Come into the garden, Maud'

PART II

I

I

'The fault was mine, the fault was mine'—

Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,

Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill?—

It is this guilty hand!—

And there rises ever a passionate cry

From underneath in the darkening land—

What is it, that has been done?

O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,

The fires of hell brake out of thy rising sun,

The fires of hell and of hate; 10
For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,

When her brother ran in his rage to the gate,

He came with the babe-faced lord, Heap'd on her terms of disgrace;

And while she wept, and I strove to be cool,

He fiercely gave me the lie, Till I with as fierce an anger spoke,

And he struck me, madman, over the face,

Struck me before the languid fool, Who was gaping and grinning by; 20

Struck for himself an evil stroke, Wrought for his house an irredeemable woe.

For front to front in an hour we stood, And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke

From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the wood,

And thunder'd up into heaven the Christless code

That must have life for a blow. Ever and ever afresh they seem'd to grow.

Was it he lay there with a fading eye?

'The fault was mine,' he whisper'd, 'fly!' 30

Then glided out of the joyous wood The ghastly Wraith of one that I know,

And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,
A cry for a brother's blood;
It will ring in my heart and my ears,
till I die, till I die.

II

Is it gone? my pulses beat—
What was it? a lying trick of the brain?

Yet I thought I saw her stand,
A shadow there at my feet,

High over the shadowy land. 40
It is gone; and the heavens fall in a gentle rain,

When they should burst and drown with deluging storms

The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,

The little hearts that know not how to forgive.

Arise, my God, and strike, for we hold Thee just,

Strike dead the whole weak race of venomous worms,

That sting each other here in the dust;

We are not worthy to live.

II

I

See what a lovely shell,
Small and pure as a pearl, 50
Lying close to my foot,

Frail, but a work divine,
Made so fairly well

With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,

A miracle of design!

II

What is it? a learned man
Could give it a clumsy name.

Let him name it who can,
The beauty would be the same. 60

III

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will

That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door

Of his house in a rainbow frill?
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,

A golden foot or a fairy horn
Thro' his dim water-world?

IV

Slight, to be crush'd with a tap
Of my finger-nail on the sand,
Small, but a work divine,
Frail, but of force to withstand,
Year upon year, the shock
Of cataract seas that snap
The three-decker's oaken spine
Athwart the ledges of rock,
Here on the Breton strand !

70

V

Breton, not Briton; here
Like a shipwreck'd man on a coast
Of ancient fable and fear —
Plagued with a flitting to and fro,
A disease, a hard mechanic ghost
That never came from on high
Nor ever arose from below,
But only moves with the moving
eye,
Flying along the land and the main —
Why should it look like Maud?
Am I to be overawed
By what I cannot but know
Is a juggle born of the brain ?

80

90

VI

Back from the Breton coast,
Sick of a nameless fear,
Back to the dark sea-line
Looking, thinking of all I have
lost;
An old song vexes my ear,
But that of Lamech is mine.

VII

For years, a measureless ill,
For years, for ever, to part —
But she, she would love me still;
And as long, O God, as she
Have a grain of love for me,
So long, no doubt, no doubt,
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,
However weary, a spark of will
Not to be trampled out.

100

VIII

Strange, that the mind, when fraught
With a passion so intense
One would think that it well
Might drown all life in the eye, —
That it should, by being so over-
wrought,
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
For a shell, or a flower, little things

110

Which else would have been past by!
And now I remember, I,
When he lay dying there,
I noticed one of his many rings —
For he had many, poor worm -- and
thought,
It is his mother's hair.

IX

Who knows if he be dead?
Whether I need have fled?
Am I guilty of blood?
However this may be,
Comfort her, comfort her, all things
good,
While I am over the sea!
Let me and my passionate love go
by,
But speak to her all things holy and
high,
Whatever happen to me!
Me and my harmful love go by;
But come to her waking, find her
asleep,
Powers of the height, Powers of the
deep,
And comfort her tho' I die!

20

130

III

Courage, poor heart of stone!
I will not ask thee why
Thou canst not understand
That thou art left for ever alone;
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone! --
Or if I ask thee why,
Care not thou to reply:
She is but dead, and the time is at
hand
When thou shalt more than die.

140

IV

I

O that 't were possible
After long grief and pain
To find the arms of my true love
Round me once again!

II

When I was wont to meet her
In the silent woody places
By the home that gave me birth,
We stood tranced in long embraces
Mixt with kisses sweeter, sweeter
Than anything on earth.

150

III

A shadow flits before me,
 Not thou, but like to thee.
 Ah, Christ, that it were possible
 For one short hour to see
 The souls we loved, that they might
 tell us
 What and where they be !

IV

It leads me forth at evening,
 It lightly winds and steals
 In a cold white robe before me,
 When all my spirit reels 160
 At the shouts, the leagues of lights,
 And the roaring of the wheels.

V

Half the night I waste in sighs,
 Half in dreams I sorrow after
 The delight of early skies ;
 In a wakeful doze I sorrow
 For the hand, the lips, the eyes,
 For the meeting of the morrow,
 The delight of happy laughter,
 The delight of low replies. 170

VI

'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
 And a dewy splendor falls
 On the little flower that clings
 To the turrets and the walls ;
 'Tis a morning pure and sweet,
 And the light and shadow fleet.
 She is walking in the meadow,
 And the woodland echo rings ;
 In a moment we shall meet. 180
 She is singing in the meadow,
 And the rivulet at her feet
 Ripples on in light and shadow
 To the ballad that she sings.

VII

Do I hear her sing as of old,
 My bird with the shining head,
 My own dove with the tender eye ?
 But there rings on a sudden a passion-
 ate cry,
 There is some one dying or dead,
 And a sullen thunder is roll'd ;
 For a tumult shakes the city, 190
 And I wake, my dream is fled.
 In the shuddering dawn, behold,
 Without knowledge, without pity,
 By the curtains of my bed
 That abiding phantom cold !

VIII

Get thee hence, nor come again,
 Mix not memory with doubt,
 Pass, thou deathlike type of pain,
 Pass and cease to move about !
 'T is the blot upon the brain 200
 That *will* show itself without.

IX

Then I rise, the eave-drops fall,
 And the yellow vapors choke
 The great city sounding wide ;
 The day comes, a dull red ball
 Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
 On the misty river-tide.

X

Thro' the hubbub of the market
 I steal, a wasted frame ;
 It crosses here, it crosses there, 210
 Thro' all that crowd confused and
 loud,
 The shadow still the same ;
 And on my heavy eyelids
 My anguish hangs like shame.

XI

Alas for her that met me,
 That heard me softly call,
 Came glimmering thro' the laurels
 At the quiet evenfall,
 In the garden by the turrets
 Of the old manorial hall ! 220

XII

Would the happy spirit descend
 From the realms of light and song,
 In the chamber or the street,
 As she looks among the blest,
 Should I fear to greet my friend
 Or to say 'Forgive the wrong,'
 Or to ask her, 'Take me, sweet,
 To the regions of thy rest' ?

XIII

But the broad light glares and beats,
 And the shadow flits and fleets 230
 And will not let me be ;
 And I loathe the squares and streets,
 And the faces that one meets,
 Hearts with no love for me.
 Always I long to creep
 Into some still cavern deep,
 There to weep, and weep, and
 weep
 My whole soul out to thee.

V

I

Dead, long dead,
Long dead ! 240

And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with pain,
For into a shallow grave they are thrust,

Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat,
beat,

The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain,
With never an end to the stream of passing feet,

Driving, hurrying, marrying, burying,
Clamor and rumble, and ringing and clatter ; 251

And here beneath it is all as bad,
For I thought the dead had peace, but it is not so.

To have no peace in the grave, is that not sad ?

But up and down and to and fro,
Ever about me the dead men go ;
And then to hear a dead man chatter
Is enough to drive one mad.

II

Wretchedest age, since Time began,
They cannot even bury a man ; 260
And tho' we paid our tithes in the days that are gone,
Not a bell was rung, not a prayer was read.

It is that which makes us loud in the world of the dead ;

There is none that does his work, not one.

A touch of their office might have sufficed,

But the churchmen fain would kill their church,

As the churches have kill'd their Christ.

III

See, there is one of us sobbing,
No limit to his distress ;

And another, a lord of all things, praying 270

To his own great self, as I guess ;
And another, a statesman there, be-
traying

His party-secret, fool, to the press ;
And yonder a vile physician, blabbing
The case of his patient — all for what ?
To tickle the maggot born in an empty head,

And wheedle a world that loves him not,

For it is but a world of the dead.

IV

Nothing but idiot gabble !
For the prophecy given of old 280

And then not understood,
Has come to pass as foretold ;
Not let any man think for the public good,

But babble, merely for babble.

For I never whisper'd a private affair

Within the hearing of cat or mouse,

No, not to myself in the closet alone,

But I heard it shouted at once from

the top of the house ;

Everything came to be known.

Who told *him* we were there ? 290

V

Not that gray old wolf, for he came not back

From the wilderness, full of wolves, where he used to lie ;

He has gather'd the bones for his o'ergrown whelp to crack —

Crack them now for yourself, and howl, and die.

VI

Prophet, curse me the blabbing lip,
And curse me the British vermin, the rat ;

I know not whether he came in the Hanover ship,

But I know that he lies and listens mute

In an ancient mansion's crannies and holes.

Arsenic, arsenic, sure, would do it, 300

Except that now we poison our babes, poor souls !

It is all used up for that.

VII

Tell him now : she is standing here at my head ;

Not beautiful now, not even kind ;
He may take her now ; for she never speaks her mind,

But is ever the one thing silent here.
 She is not *of* us, as I divine ;
 She comes from another stiller world
 of the dead,
 Stiller, not fairer than mine.

VIII

But I know where a garden grows, ³¹⁰
 Fairer than aught in the world beside,
 All made up of the lily and rose
 That blow by night, when the season
 is good,
 To the sound of dancing music and
 flutes :
 It is only flowers, they had no fruits,
 And I almost fear they are not roses,
 but blood ;
 For the keeper was one, so full of
 pride,
 He linkt a dead man there to a spec-
 tral bride ;
 For he, if he had not been a Sultan of
 brutes,
 Would he have that hole in his side ?

IX

But what will the old man say ? ³²¹
 He laid a cruel snare in a pit
 To catch a friend of mine one stormy
 day ;
 Yet now I could even weep to think
 of it ;
 For what will the old man say
 When he comes to the second corpse
 in the pit ?

X

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,
 Then to strike him and lay him low,
 That were a public merit, far,
 Whatever the Quaker holds, from
 sin ; ³³⁰
 But the red life spilt for a private
 blow —
 I swear to you, lawful and lawless
 war
 Are scarcely even akin.

XI

O me, why have they not buried me
 deep enough ?
 Is it kind to have made me a grave so
 rough,
 Me, that was never a quiet sleeper ?
 Maybe still I am but half-dead ;
 Then I cannot be wholly dumb.

I will cry to the steps above my
 head
 And somebody, surely, some kind
 heart will come ³⁴⁰
 To bury me, bury me
 Deeper, ever so little deeper.

PART III

I

My life has crept so long on a broken
 wing
 Thro' cells of madness, haunts of hor-
 ror and fear,
 That I come to be grateful at last for
 a little thing
 My mood is changed, for it fell at a
 time of year
 When the face of night is fair on the
 dewy downs,
 And the shining daffodil dies, and the
 Charloteer
 And starry Gemini hang like glorious
 crowns
 Over Orion's grave low down in the
 west,
 That like a silent lightning under the
 stars
 She seem'd to divide in a dream from
 a band of the blest, ¹⁰
 And spoke of a hope for the world in
 the coming wars —
 'And in that hope, dear soul, let
 trouble have rest,
 Knowing I tarry for thee,' and pointed
 to Mars
 As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on
 the Lion's breast.

II

And it was but a dream, yet it yielded
 a dear delight
 To have look'd, tho' but in a dream,
 upon eyes so fair,
 That had been in a weary world my
 one thing bright ;
 And it was but a dream, yet it light-
 en'd my despair
 When I thought that a war would
 arise in defence of the right,
 That an iron tyranny now should
 bend or cease, ²⁰
 The glory of manhood stand on his
 ancient height,
 Nor Britain's one sole God be the mil-
 lionaire.

No more shall commerce be all in all,
and Peace
Pipe on her pastoral hillock a languid
note,
And watch her harvest ripen, her
herd increase,
Nor the cannon-bullet rust on a sloth-
ful shore,
And the cobweb woven across the
cannon's throat
Shall shake its threaded tears in the
wind no more.

III

And as months ran on and rumor of
battle grew,
'It is time, it is time, O passionate
heart,' said I, —
For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to
be pure and true, —
'It is time, O passionate heart and
morbid eye,
That old hysterical mock-disease
should die.'
And I stood on a giant deck and mixt
my breath
With a loyal people shouting a battle-
cry,
Till I saw the dreary phantom arise
and fly
Far into the North, and battle, and
seas of death.

IV

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the
higher aims
Of a land that has lost for a little her
lust of gold,
And love of a peace that was full of
wrongs and shames,
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to
be told;
And hail once more to the banner of
battle unroll'd!
Tho' many a light shall darken, and
many shall weep
For those that are crush'd in the clash
of jarring claims,
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd
on a giant liar,
And many a darkness into the light
shall leap,
And shine in the sudden making of
splendid names,
And noble thought be freer under the
sun,

And the heart of a people beat with
one desire;
For the peace, that I deem'd no peace,
is over and done,
And now by the side of the Black and
the Baltic deep,
And deathful-grinning mouths of the
fortress, flames
The blood-red blossom of war with a
heart of fire.

V

Let it flame or fade, and the war roll
down like a wind,
We have proved we have hearts in a
cause, we are noble still,
And myself have awaked, as it seems,
to the better mind.
It is better to fight for the good than
to rail at the ill;
I have felt with my native land, I am
one with my kind,
I embrace the purpose of God, and
the doom assign'd.

THE BROOK

'HERE by this brook we parted, I to
the East
And he for Italy — too late — too late:
One whom the strong sons of the
world despise;
For lucky rhymes to him were scrip
and share,
And mellow metres more than cent
for cent.
Nor could he understand how money
breeds,
Thought it a dead thing; yet himself
could make
The thing that is not as the thing that
is.
O, had he lived! In our schoolbooks
we say
Of those that held their heads above
the crowd,
They flourish'd then or then; but life
in him
Could scarce be said to flourish, only
touch'd
On such a time as goes before the leaf,
When all the wood stands in a mist
of green,
And nothing perfect. Yet the brook
he loved,

For which, in branding summers of
 Bengal,
 Or even the sweet half-English Neil-
 gherry air,
 I panted, seems, as I re-listen to it,
 Prattling the primrose fancies of the
 boy
 To me that loved him; for "O brook,"
 he says, ²⁰
 "O babbling brook," says Edmund
 in his rhyme,
 "Whence come you?" and the brook
 — why not? — replies:

I come from haunts of coot and hern,
 I make a sudden sally,
 And sparkle out among the fern,
 To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,
 Or slip between the ridges,
 By twenty thorps, a little town,
 And half a hundred bridges. ³⁰

Till last by Philip's farm I flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

'Poor lad, he died at Florence, quite
 worn out,
 Travelling to Naples. There is Darn-
 ley bridge,
 It has more ivy; there the river; and
 there
 Stands Philip's farm where brook and
 river meet.

I chatter over stony ways,
 In little sharps and trebles, ⁴⁰
 I bubble into eddying bays,
 I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret
 By many a field and fallow,
 And many a fairy foreland set
 With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go, ⁵⁰
 But I go on for ever.

'But Philip chatter'd more than
 brook or bird,
 Old Philip; all about the fields you
 caught
 His weary daylong chirping, like the
 dry
 High-elbow'd grigs that leap in sum-
 mer grass.

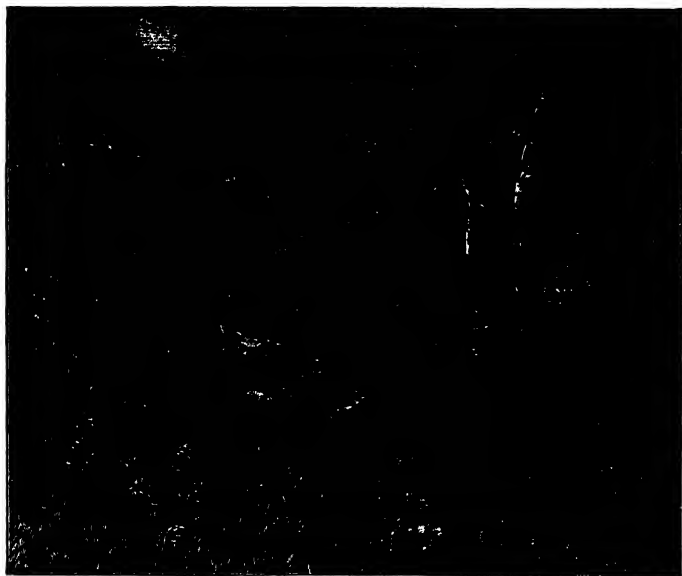
I wind about, and in and out,
 With here a blossom sailing,
 And here and there a lusty trout,
 And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake
 Upon me, as I travel ⁶⁰
 With many a silvery water-break
 Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.

'O darling Katie Willows, his one
 child!
 A maiden of our century, yet most
 meek;
 A daughter of our meadows, yet not
 coarse;
 Straight, but as lissome as a hazel
 wand; ⁷⁰
 Her eyes a bashful azure, and her
 hair
 In gloss and hue the chestnut, when
 the shell
 Divides threefold to show the fruit
 within.

'Sweet Katie, once I did her a good
 turn,
 Her and her far-off cousin and be-
 trothed,
 James Willows, of one name and heart
 with her.
 For here I came, twenty years back
 — the week
 Before I parted with poor Edmund —
 crost
 By that old bridge which, half in
 ruins then,
 Still makes a hoary eyebrow for the
 gleam ⁸⁰
 Beyond it, where the waters marry —
 crost,
 Whistling a random bar of Bonny
 Doon,
 And push'd at Philip's garden-gate.
 The gate,
 Half-parted from a weak and scolding
 hinge,
 Stuck; and he clamor'd from a case-
 ment, "Run,"
 To Katie somewhere in the walks be-
 low,
 "Run, Katie!" Katie never ran; she
 moved



'I make a sudden sally
And sparkle out among the fern'

To meet me, winding under woodbine
bowers,
A little flutter'd, with her eyelids down,
Fresh apple-blossom, blushing for a
boon. 90

'What was it? less of sentiment
than sense
Had Katie; not illiterate, nor of those
Who dabbling in the fount of fictive
tears,
And nursed by mealy-mouth'd philan-
thropies,
Divorce the Feeling from her mate
the Deed.

'She told me. She and James had
quarrell'd. Why?
What cause of quarrel? None, she
said, no cause;
James had no cause: but when I prest
the cause,
I learnt that James had flickering
jealousies
Which anger'd her. Who anger'd
James? I said. 100

But Katie snatch'd her eyes at once
from mine,
And sketching with her slender pointed
foot

Some figure like a wizard pentagram
On garden gravel, let my query pass
Unclaim'd, in flushing silence, till I
ask'd

If James were coming. "Coming
every day,"

She answer'd, "ever longing to ex-
plain,

But evermore her father came across
With some long-winded tale, and broke
him short;

And James departed vext with him
and her."

How could I help her? "Would I—
was it wrong?" — 110

Claspt hands and that petitionary grace
Of sweet seventeen subdued me ere
she spoke —

"O, would I take her father for one
hour,

For one half-hour, and let him talk to
me!"

And even while she spoke, I saw where
James
Made toward us, like a wader in the
surf,
Beyond the brook, waist-deep in mea-
dow-sweet.

‘O Katie, what I suffer’d for your
sake!
For in I went, and call’d old Philip out
To show the farm. Full willingly he
rose; ¹²¹
He led me thro’ the short sweet-smell-
ing lanes
Of his wheat-suburb, babbling as he
went.
He praised his land, his horses, his
machines;
He praised his ploughs, his cows, his
hogs, his dogs;
He praised his hens, his geese, his
guinea-hens,
His pigeons, who in session on their
roofs
Approved him, bowing at their own
deserts.
Then from the plaintive mother’s teat
he took
Her blind and shuddering puppies,
naming each, ¹³⁰
And naming those, his friends, for
whom they were;
Then crost the common into Darnley
chase
To show Sir Arthur’s deer. In copse
and fern
Twinkled the innumerable ear and tail.
Then, seated on a serpent-rooted beech,
He pointed out a pasturing colt, and
said,
“That was the four-year-old I sold
the Squire.”
And there he told a long, long-winded
tale
Of how the Squire had seen the colt
at grass,
And how it was the thing his daugh-
ter wish’d, ¹⁴⁰
And how he sent the bailiff to the
farm
To learn the price, and what the price
he ask’d,
And how the bailiff swore that he was
mad,
But he stood firm, and so the matter
hung;

He gave them line; and five days after
that
He met the bailiff at the Golden
Fleece,
Who then and there had offer’d some-
thing more,
But he stood firm, and so the matter
hung;
He knew the man, the colt would
fetch its price;
He gave them line; and how by
chance at last — ¹⁵⁰
It might be May or April, he forgot,
The last of April or the first of May —
He found the bailiff riding by the
farm,
And, talking from the point, he drew
him in,
And there he mellow’d all his heart
with ale,
Until they closed a bargain, hand in
hand.

‘Then, while I breathed in sight of
haven, he —
Poor fellow, could he help it? — re-
commenced,
And ran thro’ all the coltish chronicle,
Wild Will, Black Bess, Tantivy, Tal-
lyho, ¹⁶⁰
Reform, White Rose, Bellerophon, the
Jilt,
Arbaces, and Phenomenon, and the
rest,
Till, not to die a listener, I arose,
And with me Philip, talking still; and
so
We turn’d our foreheads from the fall-
ing sun,
And following our own shadows thrice
as long
As when they follow’d us from Philip’s
door,
Arrived, and found the sun of sweet
content
Re-risen in Katie’s eyes, and all things
well.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots, ¹⁷⁰
I slide by hazel covers;
I move the sweet forget-me-nots
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,
Among my skimming swallows;
I make the netted sunbeam dance
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars
 In brambly wildernesses ;
 I linger by my shingly bars, 180
 I loiter round my cresses ;
 And out again I curve and flow
 To join the brimming river,
 For men may come and men may go,
 But I go on for ever.
 Yes, men may come and go ; and these
 are gone,
 All gone. My dearest brother, Ed-
 mund, sleeps,
 Not by the well-known stream and
 rustic spire,
 But unfamiliar Arno, and the dome
 Of Brunelleschi, sleeps in peace ; and
 he,
 Poor Philip, of all his lavish waste of
 words 191
 Remains the lean P. W. on his tomb ;
 I scraped the lichen from it. Katie
 walks

By the long wash of Australasian
 seas
 Far off, and holds her head to other
 stars,
 And breathes in April-autumns. All
 are gone.'

So Lawrence Aylmer, seated on a
 stile
 In the long hedge, and rolling in his
 mind
 Old waifs of rhyme, and bowing o'er
 the brook
 A tonsured head in middle age forlorn,
 Mused, and was mute. On a sudden
 a low breath 201
 Of tender air made tremble in the
 hedge
 The fragile bindweed-bells and briony
 rings ;
 And he look'd up. There stood a mai-
 den near,



'I steal by lawns and grassy plots,
 I slide by hazel covers'

Waiting to pass. In much amaze he
 stared
 On eyes a bashful azure, and on hair
 In gloss and hue the chestnut, when
 the shell
 Divides threefold to show the fruit
 within;
 Then, wondering, ask'd her, 'Are you
 from the farm?'
 'Yes,' answer'd she. 'Pray stay a
 little; pardon me, ²¹⁰
 What do they call you?' 'Katie.'
 'That were strange.
 What surname?' 'Willows.' 'No!'
 'That is my name.'
 'Indeed!' and here he look'd so self-
 perplex,
 That Katie laugh'd, and laughing
 blush'd, till he
 Laugh'd also, but as one before he
 wakes,
 Who feels a glimmering strangeness
 in his dream.
 Then looking at her: 'Too happy,
 fresh and fair,
 Too fresh and fair in our sad world's
 best bloom,
 To be the ghost of one who bore your
 name
 About these meadows, twenty years
 ago.' ²²⁰

'Have you not heard?' said Katie,
 'we came back.
 We bought the farm we tenanted be-
 fore.
 Am I so like her? so they said on
 board.
 Sir, if you knew her in her English
 days,
 My mother, as it seems you did, the
 days
 That most she loves to talk of, come
 with me.
 My brother James is in the harvest-
 field;
 But she—you will be welcome—O,
 come in!'

THE DAISY

WRITTEN AT EDINBURGH

O LOVE, what hours were thine and
 mine,
 In lands of palm and southern pine;

In lands of palm, or orange-blossom,
 Of olive, aloe, and maize and vine!

What Roman strength Turbula show'd
 In ruin, by the mountain road;
 How like a gem, beneath, the city
 Of little Monaco, basking, glow'd!

How richly down the rocky dell
 The torrent vineyard streaming fell ¹⁰
 To meet the sun and sunny waters,
 That only heaved with a summer
 swell!

What slender campanili grew
 By bays, the peacock's neck in hue;
 Where, here and there, on sandy
 beaches
 A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew!

How young Columbus seem'd to rove,
 Yet present in his natal grove,
 Now watching high on mountain
 cornice,
 And steering, now, from a purple
 cove, ²⁰

Now pacing mute by ocean's rim;
 Till, in a narrow street and dim,
 I stay'd the wheels at Cogoletto,
 And drank, and loyally drank to him!

Nor knew we well what pleased us
 most;
 Not the clipt palm of which they
 boast,
 But distant color, happy hamlet,
 A moulder'd citadel on the coast,

Or tower, or high hill-convent, seen
 A light amid its olives green; ³⁰
 Or olive-hoary cape in ocean;
 Or rosy blossom in hot ravine,

Where oleanders flush'd the bed
 Of silent torrents, gravel-spread;
 And, crossing, oft we saw the glisten
 Of ice, far up on a mountain head.

We loved that hall, tho' white and cold,
 Those niched shapes of noble mould,
 A princely people's awful princes,
 The grave, severe Genovese of old. ⁴⁰

At Florence too what golden hours,
 In those long galleries, were ours;

What drives about the fresh Cas-
cinè,
Or walks in Boboli's ducal bowers !

In bright vignettes, and each complete,
Of tower or duomo, sunny-sweet,
Or palace, how the city glitter'd,
Thro' cypress avenues, at our feet !

But when we crost the Lombard plain
Remember what a plague of rain ; 50
Of rain at Reggio, rain at Parma,
At Lodi rain, Piacenza rain.

And stern and sad — so rare the smiles
Of sunlight — look'd the Lombard
piles ;

Porch-pillars on the lion resting,
And sombre, old, colonnaded aisles.

O Milan, O the chanting quires,
The giant windows' blazon'd fires,
The height, the space, the gloom,
the glory !
A mount of marble, a hundred spires !

I climb'd the roofs at break of day ; 61
Sun-smitten Alps before me lay.
I stood among the silent statues,
And statued pinnacles, mute as they.

How faintly-flush'd, how phantom-
fair,
Was Monte Rosa, hanging there
A thousand shadowy-pencill'd val-
leys
And snowy dells in a golden air !

Remember how we came at last 69
To Como ; shower and storm and blast
Had blown the lake beyond his limit,
And all was flooded ; and how we
past

From Como, when the light was gray,
And in my head, for half the day,
The rich Virgilian rustic measure
Of 'Lari Maxume,' all the way,

Like ballad-burthen music, kept,
As on the Larian crept
To that fair port below the castle
Of Queen Theodolind, where we slept ;

Or hardly slept, but watch'd awake 81
A cypress in the moonlight shake,

The moonlight touching o'er a ter-
race
One tall agavè above the lake.

What more ? we took our last adieu,
And up the snowy Splügen drew ;
But ere we reach'd the highest sum-
mit
I pluck'd a daisy, I gave it you.

It told of England then to me,
And now it tells of Italy. 90
O love, we two shall go no longer
To lands of summer across the sea,

So dear a life your arms enfold
Whose crying is a cry for gold ;
Yet here to-night in this dark city,
When ill and weary, alone and cold,

I found, tho' crush'd to hard and
dry,
This nursling of another sky
Still in the little book you lent me,
And where you tenderly laid it by ; 100

And I forgot the clouded Forth,
The gloom that saddens heaven and
earth,
The bitter east, the misty summer
And gray metropolis of the North.

Perchance to lull the throbs of pain,
Perchance to charm a vacant brain,
Perchance to dream you still beside
me,
My fancy fled to the South again.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE

COME, when no graver cares employ,
Godfather, come and see your boy ;
Your presence will be sun in win-
ter,
Making the little one leap for joy.

For, being of that honest few
Who give the Fiend himself his due,
Should eighty thousand college-
councils

Thunder 'Anathema,' friend, at you,

Should all our churchmen foam in
spite
At you, so careful of the right, 10

Yet one lay-hearth would give you
welcome —
Take it and come — to the Isle of
Wight;

Where, far from noise and smoke of
town,
I watch the twilight falling brown
All round a careless-order'd garden
Close to the ridge of a noble down.

You'll have no scandal while you
dine,
But honest talk and wholesome wine,
And only hear the magpie gossip
Garrulous under a roof of pine; 20

For groves of pine on either hand,
To break the blast of winter, stand,
And further on, the hoary Channel
Tumbles a billow on chalk and sand;

Where, if below the milky steep
Some ship of battle slowly creep,
And on thro' zones of light and
shadow
Glimmer away to the lonely deep,

We might discuss the Northern sin
Which made a selfish war begin, 30
Dispute the claims, arrange the
chances, —
Emperor, Ottoman, which shall win;

Or whether war's avenging rod
Shall lash all Europe into blood;
Till you should turn to dearer mat-
ters,
Dear to the man that is dear to God, —

How best to help the slender store,
How mend the dwellings, of the poor,
How gain in life, as life advances,
Valor and charity more and more. 40

Come, Maurice, come; the lawn as yet
Is hoar with rime or spongy-wet,
But when the wreath of March has
blossom'd, —
Crocus, anemone, violet, —

Or later, pay one visit here,
For those are few we hold as dear;
Nor pay but one, but come for many,
Many and many a happy year.

January, 1864.

WILL

I

O, WELL for him whose will is strong!
He suffers, but he will not suffer long;
He suffers, but he cannot suffer wrong.
For him nor moves the loud world's
random mock,
Nor all Calamity's hugest waves con-
found,
Who seems a promontory of rock,
That, compass'd round with turbulent
sound,
In middle ocean meets the surging
shock,
Tempest-buffeted, citadel-crown'd.

II

But ill for him who, bettering not
with time,
Corrupts the strength of heaven-de-
scended Will,
And ever weaker grows thro' acted
crime,
Or seeming-genial venial fault,
Recurring and suggesting still!
He seems as one whose footsteps halt,
Toiling in immeasurable sand,
And o'er a weary sultry land,
Far beneath a blazing vault,
Sown in a wrinkle of the monstrous
hill,
The city sparkles like a grain of salt.

ODE ON THE DEATH OF THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON

I

Bury the Great Duke
With an empire's lamentation;
Let us bury the Great Duke
To the noise of the mourning of a
mighty nation;
Mourning when their leaders fall,
Warriors carry the warrior's pall,
And sorrow darkens hamlet and hall.

II

Where shall we lay the man whom we
deplore?
Here, in streaming London's central
roar.
Let the sound of those he wrought
for, 10
And the feet of those he fought for,
Echo round his bones for evermore.

III

Lead out the pageant : sad and slow,
 As fits an universal woe,
 Let the long, long procession go,
 And let the sorrowing crowd about it
 grow,
 And let the mournful martial music
 blow ;
 The last great Englishman is low.

IV

Mourn, for to us he seems the last,
 Remembering all his greatness in the
 past. 20
 No more in soldier fashion will he
 greet
 With lifted hand the gazer in the
 street.
 O friends, our chief state-oracle is
 mute !
 Mourn for the man of long-enduring
 blood,
 The statesman - warrior, moderate,
 resolute,
 Whole in himself, a common good.
 Mourn for the man of amplest influ-
 ence,
 Yet clearest of ambitious crime,
 Our greatest yet with least pretence,
 Great in council and great in war, 30
 Foremost captain of his time,
 Rich in saving common-sense,
 And, as the greatest only are,
 In his simplicity sublime.
 O good gray head which all men knew,
 O voice from which their omens all
 men drew,
 O iron nerve to true occasion true,
 O fallen at length that tower of
 strength
 Which stood four-square to all the
 winds that blew !
 Such was he whom we deplore. 40
 The long self-sacrifice of life is o'er.
 The great World-victor's victor will
 be seen no more.

V

All is over and done.
 Render thanks to the Giver,
 England, for thy son.
 Let the bell be toll'd.
 Render thanks to the Giver,
 And render him to the mould.
 Under the cross of gold
 That shines over city and river, 50

There he shall rest for ever
 Among the wise and the bold.
 Let the bell be toll'd,
 And a reverent people behold
 The towering car, the sable steeds.
 Bright let it be with its blazon'd deeds,
 Dark in its funeral fold.
 Let the bell be toll'd,
 And a deeper knell in the heart be
 knoll'd ;
 And the sound of the sorrowing anthem
 roll'd 60
 Thro' the dome of the golden cross ;
 And the volleying cannon thunder his
 loss ;
 He knew their voices of old.
 For many a time in many a clime
 His captain's-ear has heard them boom
 Bellowing victory, bellowing doom.
 When he with those deep voices
 wrought,
 Guarding realms and kings from
 shame,
 With those deep voices our dead cap-
 tain taught
 The tyrant, and asserts his claim 70
 In that dread sound to the great name
 Which he has worn so pure of blame,
 In praise and in dispraise the same,
 A man of well-attemper'd frame.
 O civic muse, to such a name,
 To such a name for ages long,
 To such a name,
 Preserve a broad approach of fame,
 And ever-echoing avenues of song !

VI

'Who is he that cometh, like an hon-
 or'd guest, 80
 With banner and with music, with
 soldier and with priest,
 With a nation weeping, and breaking
 on my rest ?'—
 Mighty Seaman, this is he
 Was great by land as thou by sea.
 Thine island loves thee well, thou
 famous man,
 The greatest sailor since our world
 began.
 Now, to the roll of muffled drums,
 To thee the greatest soldier comes ;
 For this is he
 Was great by land as thou by sea. 90
 His foes were thine ; he kept us free ;
 O, give him welcome, this is he
 Worthy of our gorgeous rites,

And worthy to be laid by thee ;
 For this is England's greatest son,
 He that gain'd a hundred fights,
 Nor ever lost an English gun ;
 This is he that far away
 Against the myriads of Assaye
 Clash'd with his fiery few and won ; 100
 And underneath another sun,
 Warring on a later day,
 Round affrighted Lisbon drew
 The treble works, the vast designs
 Of his labor'd rampart-lines,
 Where he greatly stood at bay,
 Whence he issued forth anew,
 And ever great and greater grew,
 Beating from the wasted vines
 Back to France her banded swarms, 110
 Back to France with countless blows,
 Till o'er the hills her eagles flew
 Beyond the Pyrenean pines,
 Follow'd up in valley and glen
 With blare of bugle, clamor of men,
 Roll of cannon and clash of arms,
 And England pouring on her foes.
 Such a war had such a close.
 Again their ravening eagle rose
 In anger, wheel'd on Europe-shadow-
 ing wings, 120
 And barking for the thrones of kings ;
 Till one that sought but Duty's iron
 crown
 On that loud Sabbath shook the spoiler
 down ;
 A day of onsets of despair !
 Dash'd on every rocky square,
 Their surging charges foam'd them-
 selves away ;
 Last, the Prussian trumpet blew ;
 Thro' the long-tormented air
 Heaven flash'd a sudden jubilant ray,
 And down we swept and charged and
 overthrew. 130
 So great a soldier taught us there
 What long-enduring hearts could do
 In that world-earthquake, Waterloo !
 Mighty Seaman, tender and true,
 And pure as he from taint of craven
 guile,
 O saviour of the silver-coasted isle,
 O shaker of the Baltic and the Nile,
 If aught of things that here befall
 Touch a spirit among things divine,
 If love of country move thee there at
 all, 140
 Be glad, because his bones are laid by
 thine !

And thro' the centuries let a people's
 voice
 In full acclaim,
 A people's voice,
 The proof and echo of all human fame,
 A people's voice, when they rejoice
 At civic revel and pomp and game,
 Attest their great commander's claim
 With honor, honor, honor, honor to
 him,
 Eternal honor to his name. 150

VII

A people's voice ! we are a people yet.
 Tho' all men else their nobler dreams
 forget,
 Confused by brainless mobs and law-
 less Powers,
 Thank Him who isled us here, and
 roughly set
 His Briton in blown seas and storming
 showers,
 We have a voice with which to pay
 the debt
 Of boundless love and reverence and
 regret
 To those great men who fought, and
 kept it ours.
 And keep it ours, O God, from brute
 control !
 O Statesmen, guard us, guard the eye,
 the soul 160
 Of Europe, keep our noble England
 whole,
 And save the one true seed of freedom
 sown
 Betwixt a people and their ancient
 throne,
 That sober freedom out of which there
 springs
 Our loyal passion for our temperate
 kings !
 For, saving that, ye help to save man-
 kind
 Till public wrong be crumbled into
 dust,
 And drill the raw world for the march
 of mind,
 Till crowds at length be sane and
 crowns be just.
 But wink no more in slothful over-
 trust. 170
 Remember him who led your hosts ;
 He bade you guard the sacred coasts.
 Your cannons moulder on the seaward
 wall ;

His voice is silent in your council-hall
 For ever ; and whatever tempests lour
 For ever silent ; even if they broke
 In thunder, silent ; yet remember all
 He spoke among you, and the Man
 who spoke ;
 Who never sold the truth to serve the
 hour,
 Nor palter'd with Eternal God for
 power ; 180
 Who let the turbid streams of rumor
 flow
 Thro' either babbling world of high
 and low ;
 Whose life was work, whose language
 rife
 With rugged maxims hewn from life ;
 Who never spoke against a foe ;
 Whose eighty winters freeze with one
 rebuke
 All great self-seekers trampling on the
 right.
 Truth-teller was our England's Alfred
 named ;
 Truth-lover was our English Duke ;
 Whatever record leap to light 190
 He never shall be shamed.

VIII

Lo ! the leader in these glorious wars
 Now to glorious burial slowly borne,
 Follow'd by the brave of other lands,
 He, on whom from both her open
 hands
 Lavish Honor shower'd all her stars,
 And affluent Fortune emptied all her
 horn.
 Yea, let all good things await
 Him who cares not to be great
 But as he saves or serves the state. 200
 Not once or twice in our rough island-
 story
 The path of duty was the way to
 glory.
 He that walks it, only thirsting
 For the right, and learns to deaden
 Love of self, before his journey closes.
 He shall find the stubborn thistle burst-
 ing
 Into glossy purples, which outredden
 All voluptuous garden-roses.
 Not once or twice in our fair island
 story
 The path of duty was the way to
 glory. 210
 He, that ever following her commands,

On with toil of heart and knees and
 hands,
 Thro' the long gorge to the far light
 has won
 His path upward, and prevail'd,
 Shall find the toppling crags of Duty
 scaled
 Are close upon the shining table-lands
 To which our God Himself is moon
 and sun.
 Such was he : his work is done.
 But while the races of mankind endure
 Let his great example stand 220
 Colossal, seen of every land,
 And keep the soldier firm, the states-
 man pure ;
 Till in all lands and thro' all human
 story
 The path of duty be the way to glory.
 And let the land whose hearths he
 saved from shame
 For many and many an age proclaim
 At civic revel and pomp and game,
 And when the long-illumin'd cities
 flame,
 Their ever-loyal iron leader's fame,
 With honor, honor, honor, honor to
 him, 230
 Eternal honor to his name.

IX

Peace, his triumph will be sung
 By some yet unmoulded tongue
 Far on in summers that we shall not
 see.
 Peace, it is a day of pain
 For one about whose patriarchal knee
 Late the little children clung.
 O peace, it is a day of pain
 For one upon whose hand and heart
 and brain
 Once the weight and fate of Europe
 hung. 240
 Ours the pain, be his the gain !
 More than is of man's degree
 Must be with us, watching here
 At this, our great solemnity.
 Whom we see not we revere ;
 We revere, and we refrain
 From talk of battles loud and vain,
 And brawling memories all too free
 For such a wise humility
 As befits a solemn fane : 250
 We revere, and while we hear
 The tides of Music's golden sea
 Setting toward eternity,

Uplifted high in heart and hope are
we,

Until we doubt not that for one so true
There must be other nobler work to do
Than when he fought at Waterloo,
And Victor he must ever be.

For tho' the Giant Ages heave the hill
And break the shore, and evermore 260
Make and break, and work their will,
Tho' world on world in myriad myriads
roll

Round us each with different powers,
And other forms of life than ours,
What know we greater than the soul ?
On God and Godlike men we build our
trust.

Hush, the Dead March wails in the
people's ears ;

The dark crowd moves, and there are
sobs and tears ;

The black earth yawns ; the mortal
disappears ;

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust ; 270

He is gone who seem'd so great. —
Gone, but nothing can bereave him
Of the force he made his own
Being here, and we believe him
Something far advanced in State,
And that he wears a truer crown
Than any wreath that man can weave
him.

Speak no more of his renown,
Lay your earthly fancies down,
And in the vast cathedral leave him, 280
God accept him, Christ receive him !
1852.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE

I

HALF a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.
'Forward the Light Brigade !
Charge for the guns !' he said.
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

II

'Forward, the Light Brigade !'
Was there a man dismay'd ?

Not tho' the soldier knew
Some one had blunder'd.
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die.
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

III

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volley'd and thunder'd ;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of hell
Rode the six hundred.

IV

Flash'd all their sabres bare,
Flash'd as they turn'd in air
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wonder'd.
Plunged in the battery-smoke
Right thro' the line they broke ;
Cossack and Russian
Reel'd from the sabre-stroke
Shatter'd and sunder'd.
Then they rode back, but not,
Not the six hundred.

V

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volley'd and thunder'd ;
Storm'd at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
They that had fought so well
Came thro' the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

VI

When can their glory fade ?
O the wild charge they made !
All the world wonder'd.
Honor the charge they made !
Honor the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred !

64.



.45

' Beating it in upon his weary brain,
As tho' it were the burthen of a song,
" Not to tell her, never to let her know "'

ENOCH ARDEN AND OTHER POEMS

ENOCH ARDEN

Long lines of cliff breaking have
left a chasm ;
And in the chasm are foam and yellow
sands ;
Beyond, red roofs about a narrow
wharf
In cluster ; then a moulder'd church ;
and higher
A long street climbs to one tall-tower'd
mill ;

And high in heaven behind it a gray
down
With Danish barrows ; and a hazel-
wood,
By autumn nutters haunted, flourishes
Green in a cuplike hollow of the down.
Here on this beach a hundred years
ago,
Three children of three houses, Annie¹⁰
Lee,
The prettiest little damsel in the port,
And Philip Ray, the miller's only son,

And Enoch Arden, a rough sailor's lad
 Made orphan by a winter shipwreck,
 play'd
 Among the waste and lumber of the
 shore,
 Hard coils of cordage, swarthy fish-
 ing-nets,
 Anchors of rusty fluke, and boats up-
 drawn;
 And built their castles of dissolving
 sand
 To watch them overflow'd, or follow-
 ing up
 And flying the white breaker, daily²⁰
 left
 The little footprint daily wash'd away.

A narrow cave ran in beneath the
 cliff;
 In this the children play'd at keeping
 house.
 Enoch was host one day, Philip the
 next,
 While Annie still was mistress; but
 at times
 Enoch would hold possession for a
 week:
 'This is my house and this my little
 wife.'
 'Mine too,' said Philip; 'turn and
 turn about;'
 When, if they quarrell'd, Enoch
 stronger-made³⁰
 Was master. Then would Philip, his
 blue eyes
 All flooded with the helpless wrath of
 tears,
 Shriek out, 'I hate you, Enoch,' and
 at this
 The little wife would weep for com-
 pany,
 And pray them not to quarrel for her
 sake,
 And say she would be little wife to
 both.

But when the dawn of rosy child-
 hood past,
 And the new warmth of life's ascend-
 ing sun
 Was felt by either, either fixt his heart
 On that one girl; and Enoch spoke
 his love,⁴⁰
 But Philip loved in silence; and the
 girl
 Seem'd kinder unto Philip than to him;

But she loved Enoch, tho' she knew
 it not,
 And would if ask'd deny it. Enoch set
 A purpose evermore before his eyes,
 To hoard all savings to the uttermost,
 To purchase his own boat, and make
 a home
 For Annie; and so prosper'd that at last
 A luckier or a bolder fisherman,
 A carefuller in peril, did not breathe
 For leagues along that breaker-beaten
 coast⁵¹
 Than Enoch. Likewise had he served
 a year
 On board a merchantman, and made
 himself
 Full sailor; and he thrice had pluck'd
 a life
 From the dread sweep of the down-
 streaming seas,
 And all men look'd upon him favor-
 ably.
 And ere he touch'd his one-and-twen-
 tieth May
 He purchased his own boat, and made
 a home
 For Annie, neat and nestlike, halfway
 up
 The narrow street that clamber'd to-
 ward the mill.⁶⁰

Then, on a golden autumn eventide,
 The younger people making holiday,
 With bag and sack and basket, great
 and small,
 Went nutting to the hazels. Philip
 stay'd—
 His father lying sick and needing
 him—
 An hour behind; but as he climb'd
 the hill,
 Just where the prone edge of the
 wood began
 To feather toward the hollow, saw
 the pair,
 Enoch and Annie, sitting hand-in-
 hand,
 His large gray eyes and weather-beaten
 face⁷⁰
 All-kindled by a still and sacred fire,
 That burn'd as on an altar. Philip
 look'd,
 And in their eyes and faces read his
 doom;
 Then, as their faces drew together,
 groan'd,

And slipt aside, and like a wounded
life
Crept down into the hollows of the
wood;
There, while the rest were loud in
merry-making,
Had his dark hour unseen, and rose
and past
Bearing a lifelong hunger in his heart.

So these were wed, and merrily rang
the bells, 80
And merrily ran the years, seven
happy years,
Seven happy years of health and com-
petence,

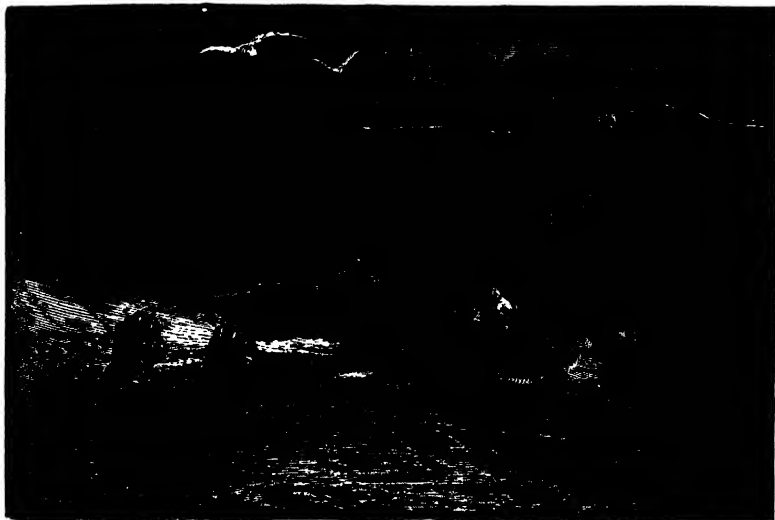
And mutual love and honorable toil,
With children, first a daughter. In
him woke,
With his first babe's first cry, the
noble wish

To save all earnings to the uttermost,
And give his child a better bringing-up
Than his had been, or hers; a wish re-
new'd,

When two years after came a boy to be
The rosy idol of her solitudes, 90
While Enoch was abroad on wrathful
seas,

Or often journeying landward; for in
truth
Enoch's white horse, and Enoch's
ocean-spoil
In ocean-smelling osier, and his face,
Rough-redden'd with a thousand win-
ter gales,
Not only to the market-cross were
known,
But in the leafy lanes behind the down,
Far as the portal-warding lion-whelp
And peacock yew-tree of the lonely
Hall,
Whose Friday fare was Enoch's minis-
tering. 100

Then came a change, as all things
human change.
Ten miles to northward of the narrow
port
Open'd a larger haven. Thither used
Enoch at times to go by land or
sea;
And once when there, and clambering
on a mast
In harbor, by mischance he slipt and
fell.
A limb was broken when they lifted
him;



'He thrice had pluck'd a life
From the dread sweep of the down-streaming seas'

And while he lay recovering there, his wife
 Bore him another son, a sickly one.
 Another hand crept too across his trade ¹¹⁰
 Taking her bread and theirs; and on him fell,
 Altho' a grave and staid God-fearing man,
 Yet lying thus inactive, doubt and gloom.
 He seem'd, as in a nightmare of the night,
 To see his children leading evermore
 Low miserable lives of hand-to-mouth,
 And her he loved a beggar. Then he pray'd,
 'Save them from this, whatever comes to me.'
 And while he pray'd, the master of that ship
 Enoch had served in, hearing his mischance, ¹²⁰
 Came, for he knew the man and valued him,
 Reporting of his vessel China-bound,
 And wanting yet a boatswain. Would he go?
 There yet were many weeks before she sail'd,
 Sail'd from this port. Would Enoch have the place?
 And Enoch all at once assented to it,
 Rejoicing at that answer to his prayer.

So now that shadow of mischance appear'd
 No graver than as when some little cloud
 Cuts off the fiery highway of the sun,
 And isles a light in the offing. Yet the wife — ¹³¹
 When he was gone — the children — what to do?
 Then Enoch lay long-pondering on his plans:
 To sell the boat — and yet he loved her well —
 How many a rough sea had he weather'd in her!
 He knew her, as a horseman knows his horse —
 And yet to sell her — then with what she brought
 Buy goods and stores — set Annie forth in trade

With all that seamen needed or their wives —
 So might she keep the house while he was gone. ¹⁴⁰
 Should he not trade himself out yonder? go
 This voyage more than once? yea, twice or thrice —
 As oft as needed — last, returning rich,
 Become the master of a larger craft,
 With fuller profits lead an easier life,
 Have all his pretty young ones educated,
 And pass his days in peace among his own.

Thus Enoch in his heart determined all;
 Then moving homeward came on Annie pale,
 Nursing the sickly babe, her latest-born. ¹⁵⁰
 Forward she started with a happy cry,
 And laid the feeble infant in his arms;
 Whom Enoch took, and handled all his limbs,
 Appraised his weight and fondled fatherlike,
 But had no heart to break his purposes
 To Annie, till the morrow, when he spoke.

Then first since Enoch's golden ring had girt
 Her finger, Annie fought against his will;
 Yet not with brawling opposition she,
 But manifold entreaties, many a tear,
 Many a sad kiss by day, by night, renew'd — ¹⁶¹
 Sure that all evil would come out of it —
 Besought him, supplicating, if he cared
 For her or his dear children, not to go.
 He not for his own self caring, but her,
 Her and her children, let her plead in vain;
 So grieving held his will, and bore it thro'.

For Enoch parted with his old sea-friend,
 Bought Annie goods and stores, and set his hand
 To fit their little streetward sitting-room ¹⁷⁰



'Forward she started with a happy cry,
And laid the feeble infant in his arms'

With shelf and corner for the goods
and stores.
So all day long till Enoch's last at
home,
Shaking their pretty cabin, hammer
and axe,
Auger and saw, while Annie seem'd to
hear
Her own death-scaffold raising, shrill'd
and rang,
Till this was ended, and his careful
hand, —
The space was narrow, — having
order'd all
Almost as neat and close as Nature
packs

Her blossom or her seedling, paused,
and he,
Who needs would work for Annie to
the last, 180
Ascending tired, heavily slept till
morn.

And Enoch faced this morning of
farewell
Brightly and boldly. All his Annie's
fears,
Save as his Annie's, were a laughter to
him.
Yet Enoch as a brave God-fearing man
Bow'd himself down, and in that mys-
tery

Where God-in-man is one with man-in-God,
Pray'd for a blessing on his wife and babes,
Whatever came to him; and then he said:

'Annie, this voyage by the grace of God
Will bring fair weather yet to all of us.¹⁹⁰

Keep a clean hearth and a clear fire for me,
For I'll be back, my girl, before you know it;'

Then lightly rocking baby's cradle,
'and he,

This pretty, puny, weakly little one, —
Nay — for I love him all the better for it —

God bless him, he shall sit upon my knees

And I will tell him tales of foreign parts,

And make him merry, when I come home again.

Come, Annie, come, cheer up before I go.'²⁰⁰

Him running on thus hopefully she heard,

And almost hoped herself; but when he turn'd

The current of his talk to graver things

In sailor fashion roughly sermonizing
On providence and trust in heaven, she

heard,
Heard and not heard him; as the village girl,

Who sets her pitcher underneath the spring,

Musing on him that used to fill it for her,

Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow.

At length she spoke: 'O Enoch, you are wise;²¹⁰

And yet for all your wisdom well know I

That I shall look upon your face no more.'

'Well, then,' said Enoch, 'I shall look on yours.

Annie, the ship I sail in passes here' —

He named the day; — 'get you a sea-man's glass,
Spy out my face, and laugh at all your fears.'

But when the last of those last moments came.

'Annie, my girl, cheer up, be comforted,

Look to the babes, and till I come again
Keep everything shipshape, for I must

go.²²⁰

And fear no more for me; or if you fear,

Cast all your cares on God; that anchor holds.

Is He not yonder in those uttermost
Parts of the morning? if I flee to these,

Can I go from Him? and the sea is His,

The sea is His; He made it.'

Enoch rose,
Cast his strong arms about his drooping wife,

And kiss'd his wonder-stricken little ones;

But for the third, the sickly one, who slept

After a night of feverous wakefulness,
When Annie would have raised him

Enoch said,²³¹

'Wake him not, let him sleep; how should the child

Remember this?' and kiss'd him in his cot.

But Annie from her baby's forehead clipt

A tiny curl, and gave it; this he kept
Thro' all his future, but now hastily

caught
His bundle, waved his hand, and went his way.

She, when the day that Enoch mention'd came,

Borrow'd a glass, but all in vain. Perhaps

She could not fix the glass to suit her eye;²⁴⁰

Perhaps her eye was dim, hand tremulous;

She saw him not, and while he stood on deck

Waving, the moment and the vessel past.

Even to the last dip of the vanishing sail
 She watch'd it, and departed weeping
 for him ;
 Then, tho' she mourn'd his absence as
 his grave,
 Set her sad will no less to chime with
 his,
 But thro' not in her trade, not being
 bred
 To barter, nor compensating the want
 By shrewdness, neither capable of
 lies, ²⁵⁰
 Nor asking overmuch and taking less,
 And still foreboding 'what would
 Enoch say ?'
 For more than once, in days of diffi-
 culty
 And pressure, had she sold her wares
 for less
 Than what she gave in buying what
 she sold.
 She fail'd and sadden'd knowing it ;
 and thus,
 Expectant of that news which never
 came,
 Gain'd for her own a scanty suste-
 nance,
 And lived a life of silent melancholy.

Now the third child was sickly-born
 and grew ²⁶⁰
 Yet sicklier, tho' the mother cared for it
 With all a mother's care ; nevertheless,
 Whether her business often call'd her
 from it,
 Or thro' the want of what it needed
 most,
 Or means to pay the voice who best
 could tell
 What most it needed — howsoe'er it
 was,
 After a lingering, — ere she was
 aware, —
 Like the caged bird escaping sud-
 denly,
 The little innocent soul flitted away.

In that same week when Annie
 buried it, ²⁷⁰
 Philip's true heart, which hunger'd
 for her peace, —
 Since Enoch left he had not look'd
 upon her, —
 Smote him, as having kept aloof so
 long.

'Surely,' said Philip, 'I may see her
 now,
 May be some little comfort ;' there-
 fore went,
 Past thro' the solitary room in front,
 Paused for a moment at an inner door,
 Then struck it thrice, and, no one
 opening,
 Enter'd, but Annie, seated with her
 grief,
 Fresh from the burial of her little
 one, ²⁸⁰
 Cared not to look on any human face,
 But turn'd her own toward the wall
 and wept.
 Then Philip standing up said falter-
 ingly,
 'Annie, I came to ask a favor of you.'

He spoke ; the passion in her moan'd
 reply,
 'Favor from one so sad and so forlorn
 As I am !' half abash'd him ; yet un-
 ask'd,
 His bashfulness and tenderness at war,
 He set himself beside her, saying to
 her :

'I came to speak to you of what he
 wish'd, ²⁹⁰
 Enoch, your husband. I have ever
 said
 You chose the best among us — a
 strong man ;
 For where he fixt his heart he set his
 hand
 To do the thing he will'd, and bore it
 thro'.
 And wherefore did he go this weary
 way,
 And leave you lonely ? not to see the
 world —
 For pleasure ? — nay, but for the
 wherewithal
 To give his babes a better bringing up
 Than his had been, or yours ; that was
 his wish.
 And if he come again, vext will he be
 To find the precious morning hours
 were lost. ³⁰¹
 And it would vex him even in his
 grave,
 If he could know his babes were run-
 ning wild
 Like colts about the waste. So, Annie,
 now —

Have we not known each other all our
lives?
I do beseech you by the love you
bear
Him and his children not to say me
nay—
For, if you will, when Enoch comes
again
Why then he shall repay me—if you
will,
Annie—for I am rich and well-to-do.
Now let me put the boy and girl to
school;
This is the favor that I came to ask.³¹¹

Then Annie with her brows against
the wall
Answer'd, 'I cannot look you in the
face;
I seem so foolish and so broken down.
When you came in my sorrow broke
me down;
And now I think your kindness breaks
me down.
But Enoch lives; that is borne in on
me;
He will repay you. Money can be
repaid,
Not kindness such as yours.'³¹⁹

And Philip ask'd,
'Then you will let me, Annie?'

There she turn'd,
She rose, and fixt her swimming eyes
upon him,
And dwelt a moment on his kindly
face,
Then calling down a blessing on his
head
Caught at his hand, and wrung it pas-
sionately.
And past into the little garth beyond.
So lifted up in spirit he moved away.

Then Philip put the boy and girl
to school,
And bought them needful books, and
every way,
Like one who does his duty by his
own,
Made himself theirs; and tho' for
Annie's sake,
Fearing the lazy gossip of the port,
He oft denied his heart his dearest
wish,

And seldom crost her threshold, yet
he sent
Gifts by the children, garden-herbs
and fruit,
The late and early roses from his wall,
Or conies from the down, and now
and then,
With some pretext of fineness in the
meal
To save the offence of charitable,
flour
From his tall mill that whistled on
the waste.³⁴⁰

But Philip did not fathom Annie's
mind;
Scarce could the woman, when he
came upon her,
Out of full heart and boundless grati-
tude
Light on a broken word to thank him
with.
But Philip was her children's all-in-all;
From distant corners of the street they
ran
To greet his hearty welcome heartily;
Lords of his house and of his mill
were they,
Worried his passive ear with petty
wrongs
Or pleasures, hung upon him, play'd
with him
And all'd him Father Philip. Philip
gain'd³⁵⁰
As Enoch lost, for Enoch seem'd to
them
Uncertain as a vision or a dream,
Faint as a figure seen in early dawn
Down at the far end of an avenue,
Going we know not where; and so
ten years,
Since Enoch left his hearth and native
land,
Fled forward, and no news of Enoch
came.

It chanced one evening Annie's
children long'd
To go with others nutting to the
wood,
And Annie would go with them;³⁶⁰
then they begg'd
For Father Philip, as they call'd him,
too.
Him, like the working bee in blossom-
dust,



'Then Philip put the boy and girl to school,
And bought them needful books'

Blanch'd with his mill, they found ;
and saying to him,
Come with us, Father Philip,' he
denied ;
But when the children pluck'd at him
to go,
He laugh'd, and yielded readily to
their wish,
For was not Annie with them? and
they went.

But after scaling half the weary
down,
Just where the prone edge of the
wood began

To feather toward the hollow, all her
force
Fail'd her ; and sighing, 'Let me rest,
she said.
So Philip rested with her well-content
While all the younger ones with jubi-
lant cries
Broke from their elders, and tumultu-
ously
Down thro' the whitening hazels made
a plunge
To the bottom, and dispersed, and
bent or broke
The lithe reluctant boughs to tear
away

Their tawny clusters, crying to each other
And calling, here and there, about the wood. 380

But Philip sitting at her side forgot
Her presence, and remember'd one dark hour
Here in this wood, when like a wounded life
He crept into the shadow. At last he said,
Lifting his honest forehead, 'Listen, Annie,
How merry they are down yonder in the wood.
Tired, Annie?' for she did not speak a word.
'Tired?' but her face had fallen upon her hands;
At which, as with a kind of anger in him,
'The ship was lost,' he said, 'the ship was lost! 390
No more of that! why should you kill yourself
And make them orphans quite?'
And Annie said,
'I thought not of it; but—I know not why—
Their voices make me feel so solitary.'

Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke:
'Annie, there is a thing upon my mind,
And it has been upon my mind so long
That, tho' I know not when it first came there,
I know that it will out at last.
O Annie,
It is beyond all hope, against all chance, 400
That he who left you ten long years ago
Should still be living; well, then—let me speak.
I grieve to see you poor and wanting help;
I cannot help you as I wish to do
Unless—they say that women are so quick—
Perhaps you know what I would have you know—
I wish you for my wife. I fain would prove
A father to your children; I do think

They love me as a father; I am sure
That I love them as if they were mine own; 410
And I believe, if you were fast my wife,
That after all these sad uncertain years
We might be still as happy as God grants
To any of his creatures. Think upon it;
For I am well-to-do—no kin, no care,
No burthen, save my care for you and yours,
And we have known each other all our lives,
And I have loved you longer than you know.'

Then answer'd Annie—tenderly she spoke:
'You have been as God's good angel in our house. 420
God bless you for it, God reward you for it,
Philip, with something happier than myself.
Can one love twice? can you be ever loved
As Enoch was? what is it that you ask?'
'I am content,' he answer'd, 'to be loved
A little after Enoch.' 'O,' she cried,
Scared as it were, 'dear Philip, wait a while.
If Enoch comes—but Enoch will not come—
Yet wait a year, a year is not so long.
Surely I shall be wiser in a year. 430
O, wait a little!' Philip sadly said,
'Annie, as I have waited all my life
I well may wait a little.' 'Nay,' she cried,
'I am bound: you have my promise—in a year.
Will you not bide your year as I bide mine?'
And Philip answer'd, 'I will bide my year.'

Here both were mute, till Philip glancing up
Beheld the dead flame of the fallen day
Pass from the Danish barrow over-head;

Then, fearing night and chill for Annie,
 rose⁴⁴⁰
 And sent his voice beneath him thro'
 the wood.
 Up came the children laden with their
 spoil;
 Then all descended to the port, and
 there
 At Annie's door he paused and gave
 his hand,
 Saying gently, 'Annie, when I spoke
 to you,
 That was your hour of weakness. I
 was wrong,
 I am always bound to you, but you
 are free.'
 Then Annie weeping answer'd, 'I am
 bound.'

She spoke; and in one moment as it
 were,
 While yet she went about her house-
 hold ways,⁴⁵⁰

Even as she dwelt upon his latest
 words,
 'That he had loved her longer than she
 knew,
 That autumn into autumn flash'd
 again,
 And there he stood once more before
 her face,
 Claiming her promise. 'Is it a year?'
 she ask'd.
 'Yes, if the nuts,' he said, 'be ripe
 again;
 Come out and see.' But she — she put
 him off —
 So much to look to — such a change —
 a month —
 Give her a month — she knew that she
 was bound —
 A month — no more. Then Philip with
 his eyes⁴⁶⁰
 Full of that lifelong hunger, and his
 voice
 Shaking a little like a drunkard's hand,



'Then Philip coming somewhat closer spoke:
 "Annie, there is a thing upon my mind"'

'Take your own time, Annie, take
your own time.'
And Annie could have wept for pity
of him;
And yet she held him on delayingly
With many a scarce-believable excuse,
Trying his truth and his long-suffer-
ance,
Till half another year had slipt away.

By this the lazy gossips of the port,
Abhorrent of a calculation crost, ⁴⁷⁰
Began to chafe as at a personal wrong.
Some thought that Philip did but trifle
with her;
Some that she but held off to draw him
on;
And others laugh'd at her and Philip
too,
As simple folk that knew not their
own minds;
And one, in whom all evil fancies clung
Like serpent eggs together, laughingly
Would hint at worse in either. Her
own son
Was silent, tho' he often look'd his
wish;
But evermore the daughter prest upon
her ⁴⁸⁰
To wed the man so dear to all of them
And lift the household out of poverty;
And Philip's rosy face contracting
grew
Careworn and wan; and all these
things fell on her
Sharp as reproach.

At last one night it chanced
That Annie could not sleep, but ear-
nestly
Pray'd for a sign, 'My Enoch, is he
gone?'
Then compass'd round by the blind
wall of night
Brook'd not the expectant terror of her
heart,
Started from bed, and struck herself
a light, ⁴⁹⁰
Then desperately seized the holy Book,
Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,
Suddenly put her finger on the text,
'Under the palm-tree.' That was no-
thing to her,
No meaning there; she closed the Book
and slept.
When lo! her Enoch sitting on a height,

Under a palm-tree, over him the sun.
'He is gone,' she thought, 'he is happy.
he is singing
Hosanna in the highest; yonder shines
The Sun of Righteousness, and these
be palms ⁵⁰⁰
Whereof the happy people strowing
cried
"Hosanna in the highest!"' Here she
woke,
Resolved, sent for him and said wildly
to him,
'There is no reason why we should
not wed.'
'Then for God's sake,' he answer'd,
'both our sakes,
So you will wed me, let it be at once.'

So these were wed, and merrily rang
the bells,
Merrily rang the bells, and they were
wed.
But never merrily beat Annie's heart.
A footstep seem'd to fall beside her
path, ⁵¹⁰
She knew not whence; a whisper on
her ear,
She knew not what; nor loved she to
be left
Alone at home, nor ventured out alone.
What ail'd her then that, ere she
enter'd, often
Her hand dwelt lingeringly on the
latch,
Fearing to enter? Philip thought he
knew:
Such doubts and fears were common
to her state,
Being with child; but when her child
was born,
Then her new child was as herself re-
new'd,
Then the new mother came about her
heart, ⁵²⁰
Then her good Philip was her all-in-all,
And that mysterious instinct wholly
died.

And where was Enoch? Prosper-
ously sail'd
The ship 'Good Fortune,' tho' at set-
ting forth
The Biscay, roughly ridging eastward,
shook
And almost overwhelm'd her, yet un-
vext

She slipt across the summer of the world,
Then after a long tumble about the Cape
And frequent interchange of foul and fair,
She passing thro' the summer world again,
The breath of heaven came continually⁵³⁰
And sent her sweetly by the golden isles,
Till silent in her oriental haven.

There Enoch traded for himself, and bought
Quaint monsters for the market of those times,
A gilded dragon also for the babes.

Less lucky her home-voyage: at first indeed
Thro' many a fair sea-circle, day by day,
Scarce-rocking, her full-busted figure-head
Stared o'er the ripple feathering from her bows:
Then follow'd calms, and then winds variable,⁵⁴⁰
Then baffling, a long course of them; and last
Storm, such as drove her under moonless heavens
Till hard upon the cry of 'breakers' came
The crash of ruin, and the loss of all
But Enoch and two others. Half the night,
Buoy'd upon floating tackle and broken spars,
These drifted, stranding on an isle at morn
Rich, but the loneliest in a lonely sea.

No want was there of human sustenance,
Soft fruitage, mighty nuts, and nourishing roots;⁵⁵⁰
Nor save for pity was it hard to take
The helpless life so wild that it was tame.
There in a seaward-gazing mountain-gorge
They built, and thatch'd with leaves of palm, a hut,

Half hut, half native cavern. So the three,
Set in this Eden of all plenteousness,
Dwelt with eternal summer, ill-content.
For one, the youngest, hardly more than boy,
Hurt in that night of sudden ruin and wreck,
Lay lingering out a five-years' death in-life.⁵⁶⁰
They could not leave him. After he was gone,
The two remaining found a fallen stem;
And Enoch's comrade, careless of himself,
Fire-hollowing this in Indian fashion, fell
Sun-stricken, and that other lived alone.
In those two deaths he read God's warning 'wait'

The mountain wooded to the peak, the lawns
And winding glades high up like ways to heaven,
The slender coco's drooping crown of plumes,
The lightning flash of insect and of bird,⁵⁷⁰
The lustre of the long convolvuluses
That coil'd around the stately stems, and ran
Even to the limit of the land, the glows
And glories of the broad belt of the world,—
All these he saw; but what he fain had seen
He could not see, the kindly human face,
Nor ever hear a kindly voice, but heard
The myriad shriek of wheeling ocean fowl,
The league-long roller thundering on the reef,⁵⁸⁰
The moving whisper of huge trees that branch'd
And blossom'd in the zenith, or the sweep
Of some precipitous rivulet to the wave,
As down the shore he ranged, on all day long



'A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a sail'

Sat often in the seaward-gazing gorge,
 A shipwreck'd sailor, waiting for a
 sail.
 No sail from day to day, but every
 day
 The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts
 Among the palms and ferns and pre-
 cipices;
 The blaze upon the waters to the
 east;
 The blaze upon his island overhead;
 The blaze upon the waters to the west;
 Then the great stars that globed them-
 selves in heaven,
 The hollow-bellowing ocean, and
 again
 The scarlet shafts of sunrise—but no
 sail.

There often as he watch'd or seem'd
 to watch,
 So still the golden lizard on him
 paused,
 A phantom made of many phantoms
 moved
 Before him haunting him, or he him
 self
 Moved haunting people, things, and
 places, known
 Far in a darker isle beyond the
 line;
 The babes, their babble, Annie, the
 small house,
 The climbing street, the mill, the leafy
 lanes,
 The peacock yew-tree and the lonely
 Hall,

The horse he drove, the boat he sold,
the chill
November dawns and dewy-glooming
downs,
The gentle shower, the smell of dying
leaves,
And the low moan of leaden-color'd
seas.

Once likewise, in the ringing of his
ears,
Tho' faintly, merrily — far and far
away —
He heard the pealing of his parish
bells;
Then, tho' he knew not wherefore,
started up
Shuddering, and when the beauteous
hateful isle
Return'd upon him, had not his poor
heart
Spoken with That which being every-
where
Lets none who speaks with Him seem
all alone,
Surely the man had died of solitude.

Thus over Enoch's early-silvering
head
The sunny and rainy seasons came
and went
Year after year. His hopes to see his
own,
And pace the sacred old familiar fields,
Not yet had perish'd, when his lonely
doom
Came suddenly to an end. Another
ship—
She wanted water — blown by baffling
winds,
Like the 'Good Fortune,' from her
destined course,
Stay'd by this isle, not knowing where
she lay;
For since the mate had seen at early
dawn
Across a break on the mist-wreathen
isle
The silent water slipping from the
hills,
They sent a crew that landing burst
away
In search of stream or fount, and fill'd
the shores
With clamor. Downward from his
mountain gorge

Stept the long-hair'd, long-bearded
solitary,
Brown, looking hardly human,
strangely clad,
Muttering and mumbling, idiot-like
it seem'd,
With inarticulate rage, and making
signs
They knew not what; and yet he led
the way
To where the rivulets of sweet water
ran,
And ever as he mingled with the crew,
And heard them talking, his long-
bounden tongue
Was loosen'd, till he made them un-
derstand;
Whom, when their casks were fill'd,
they took aboard.
And there the tale he utter'd brokenly,
Scarce-credited at first but more and
more,
Amazed and melted all who listen'd
to it;
And clothes they gave him and free
passage home,
But oft he work'd among the rest and
shook
His isolation from him. None of these
Came from his country, or could an-
swer him,
If question'd, aught of what he cared
to know.
And dull the voyage was with long
delays,
The vessel scarce sea-worthy; but
evermore
His fancy fled before the lazy wind
Returning, till beneath a clouded moon
He like a lover down thro' all his blood
Drew in the dewy meadowy morning-
breath
Of England, blown across her ghostly
wall.
And that same morning officers and
men
Levied a kindly tax upon themselves,
Pitying the lonely man, and gave him
it;
Then moving up the coast they landed
him,
Even in that harbor whence he sail'd
before.

There Enoch spoke no word to any
one,

But homeward — home — what home?
 had he a home? —
 His home, he walk'd. Bright was
 that afternoon,
 Sunny but chill; till drawn thro'
 either chasm,
 Where either haven open'd on the
 deeps,
 Roll'd a sea-haze and whelm'd the
 world in gray,
 Cut off the length of highway on be-
 fore,
 And left but narrow breadth to left
 and right ⁶⁷⁰
 Of wither'd holt or tilth or pasturage.
 On the nigh-naked tree the robin piped
 Disconsolate, and thro' the dripping
 haze
 The dead weight of the dead leaf bore
 it down.
 Thicker the drizzle grew, deeper the
 gloom;
 Last, as it seem'd, a great mist-blotted
 light
 Flared on him, and he came upon the
 place.

Then down the long street having
 slowly stolen,
 His heart foreshadowing all calamity,
 His eyes upon the stones, he reach'd
 the home ⁶⁸⁰
 Where Anne lived and loved him,
 and his babes
 In those far-off seven happy years
 were born;
 But finding neither light nor murmur
 there —
 A bill of sale gleam'd thro' the driz-
 zle — crept
 Still downward thinking, 'dead or
 dead to me!'

Down to the pool and narrow wharf
 he went,
 Seeking a tavern which of old he knew,
 A front of timber-crost antiquity,
 So propt, worm-eaten, ruinously old,
 He thought it must have gone; but
 he was gone ⁶⁹⁰
 Who kept it, and his widow Miriam
 Lane,
 With daily-dwindling profits held the
 house;
 A haunt of brawling seamen once, but
 now

Still, with yet a bed for wandering
 men.
 There Enoch rested silent many days.

But Miriam Lane was good and gar-
 rulous,
 Nor let him be, but often breaking
 in,
 Told him, with other annals of the port,
 Not knowing — Enoch was so brown,
 so bow'd,
 So broken — all the story of his house:
 His baby's death, her growing pov-
 erty, ⁷⁰¹
 How Philip put her little ones to
 school,
 And kept them in it, his long wooing
 her,
 Her slow consent and marriage, and
 the birth
 Of Philip's child; and o'er his counte-
 nance
 No shadow past, nor motion. Any one,
 Regarding, well had deem'd he felt
 the tale
 Less than the teller; only when she
 closed,
 'Enoch, poor man, was cast away and
 lost,'
 He, shaking his gray head pathetically,
 Repeated muttering, 'cast away and
 lost;' ⁷¹¹
 Again in deeper inward whispers,
 'lost!'

But Enoch yearn'd to see her face
 again:
 'If I might look on her sweet face
 again,
 And know that she is happy.' So the
 thought
 Haunted and harass'd him, and drove
 him forth,
 At evening when the dull November
 day
 Was growing duller twilight, to the
 hill.
 There he sat down gazing on all below;
 There did a thousand memories roll
 upon him, ⁷²⁰
 Unspeakable for sadness. By and by
 The ruddy square of comfortable light,
 Far-blazing from the rear of Philip's
 house,
 Allured him, as the beacon-blaze al-
 lures

The bird of passage, till he madly
strikes
Against it and beats out his weary life.

For Philip's dwelling fronted on the
street,
The latest house to landward ; but be-
hind,
With one small gate that open'd on
the waste,
Flourish'd a little garden square and
wall'd, ⁷³⁰
And in it throve an ancient evergreen,
A yew-tree, and all round it ran a
walk
Of shingle, and a walk divided it.
But Enoch shunn'd the middle walk
and stole
Up by the wall, behind the yew ; and
thence
That which he better might have
shunn'd, if griefs
Like his have worse or better, Enoch
saw.

For cups and silver on the burnish'd
board
Sparkled and shone ; so genial was the
hearth ;
And on the right hand of the hearth
he saw ⁷⁴⁰
Philip, the slighted suitor of old
times,
Stout, rosy, with his babe across his
knees ;
And o'er her second father stoopt a
girl,
A later but a loftier Annie Lee,
Fair-hair'd and tall, and from her
lifted hand
Dangled a length of ribbon and a
ring
To tempt the babe, who rear'd his
creasy arms,
Caught at and ever miss'd it, and they
laugh'd ;
And on the left hand of the hearth he
saw
The mother glancing often toward her
babe, ⁷⁵⁰
But turning now and then to speak
with him,
Her son, who stood beside her tall and
strong,
And saying that which pleased him,
for he smiled.

Now when the dead man come to
life beheld
His wife his wife no more, and saw
the babe
Hers, yet not his, upon the father's
knee,
And all the warmth, the peace, the
happiness,
And his own children tall and beauti-
ful,
And him, that other, reigning in his
place,
Lord of his rights and of his children's
love — ⁷⁶⁰
Then he, tho' Miriam Lane had told
him all,
Because things seen are mightier than
things heard,
Stagger'd and shook, holding the
branch, and fear'd
To send abroad a shrill and terrible
cry,
Which in one moment, like the blast
of doom,
Would shatter all the happiness of the
hearth.

He therefore turning softly like a
thief,
Lest the harsh shingle should grate
underfoot,
And feeling all along the garden-
wall,
Lest he should swoon and tumble and
be found, ⁷⁷⁰
Crept to the gate, and open'd it and
closed,
As lightly as a sick man's chamber-
door,
Behind him, and came out upon the
waste.

And there he would have knelt, but
that his knees
Were feeble, so that falling prone he
dug
His fingers into the wet earth, and
pray'd :

'Too hard to bear ! why did they
take me thence ?
O God Almighty, blessed Saviour.
Thou
That didst uphold me on my lonely
isle,
Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness

A little longer! aid me, give me
 strength 781
 Not to tell her, never to let her know.
 Help me not to break in upon her
 peace.
 My children too! must I not speak to
 these?
 They know me not. I should betray
 myself.
 Never! no father's kiss for me—the
 girl
 So like her mother, and the boy, my
 son.'

'There speech and thought and na-
 ture fail'd a little,
 And he lay tranced; but when he rose
 and paced
 Back toward his solitary home again,
 All down the long and narrow street
 he went 791
 Beating it in upon his weary brain,
 As tho' it were the burthen of a song,
 'Not to tell her, never to let her
 know.'

He was not all unhappy. His re-
 solve
 Upbore him, and firm faith, and ever-
 more
 Prayer from a living source within the
 will,
 And beating up thro' all the bitter
 world,
 Like fountains of sweet water in the
 sea,
 Kept him a living soul. 'This miller's
 wife,' 800
 He said to Miriam, 'that you spoke
 about,
 Has she no fear that her first husband
 lives?'
 'Ay, ay, poor soul,' said Miriam, 'fear
 enow!
 If you could tell her you had seen him
 dead,
 Why, that would be her comfort;' and
 he thought,
 'After the Lord has call'd me she shall
 know,
 I wait His time;' and Enoch set him-
 self,
 Scorning an alms, to work whereby to
 live.
 Almost to all things could he turn his
 hand.

Cooper he was and carpenter, and
 wrought 810
 To make the boatmen fishing-nets, or
 help'd
 At lading and unlading the tall barks
 That brought the stinted commerce of
 those days,
 Thus earn'd a scanty living for himself.
 Yet since he did but labor for himself,
 Work without hope, there was not life
 in it
 Whereby the man could live; and as
 the year
 Roll'd itself round again to meet the
 day
 When Enoch had return'd, a languor
 came
 Upon him, gentle sickness, gradually
 Weakening the man, till he could do
 no more, 821
 But kept the house, his chair, and last
 his bed.
 And Enoch bore his weakness cheer-
 fully.
 For sure no gladlier does the stranded
 wreck
 See thro' the gray skirts of a lifting
 squall
 The boat that bears the hope of life
 approach
 To save the life despair'd of, than he
 saw
 Death dawning on him, and the close
 of all.

For thro' that dawning gleam'd a
 kindlier hope
 On Enoch thinking, 'after I am gone,
 Then may she learn I loved her to the
 last,' 831
 He call'd aloud for Miriam Lane and
 said:
 'Woman, I have a secret—only swear,
 Before I tell you—swear upon the
 book
 Not to reveal it, till you see me dead.'
 'Dead,' clamor'd the good woman,
 'hear him talk!
 I warrant, man, that we shall bring
 you round.'
 'Swear,' added Enoch sternly, 'on
 the book;'
 And on the book, half-frighted, Miriam
 swore.
 Then Enoch rolling his gray eyes
 upon her, 840

'Did you know Enoch Arden of this town?'
 'Know him?' she said, 'I knew him far away.
 Ay, ay, I mind him coming down the street;
 Held his head high, and cared for no man, he.'
 Slowly and sadly Enoch answer'd her:
 'His head is low, and no man cares for him.
 I think I have not three days more to live;
 I am the man.' At which the woman gave
 A half-incredulous, half-hysterical cry:
 'You Arden, you! nay, — sure he was a foot ⁸⁵⁰
 Higher than you be.' Enoch said again:
 'My God has bow'd me down to what I am;

My grief and solitude have broken me;
 Nevertheless, know you that I am he
 Who married — but that name has twice been changed —
 I married her who married Philip Ray.
 Sit, listen.' Then he told her of his voyage,
 His wreck, his lonely life, his coming back,
 His gazing in on Annie, his resolve,
 And how he kept it. As the woman heard, ⁸⁶⁰
 Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears,
 While in her heart she yearn'd incessantly
 To rush abroad all round the little haven,
 Proclaiming Enoch Arden and his woes;
 But awed and promise-bounden she forbore,



'Uphold me, Father, in my loneliness
 A little longer! aid me, give me strength'

Saying only, 'See your bairns before
you go!
Eh, let me fetch 'em, Arden,' and
arose
Eager to bring them down, for Enoch
hung
A moment on her words, but then re-
plied :

'Woman, disturb me not now at
the last,
But let me hold my purpose till I
die.
Sit down again ; mark me and under-
stand,
While I have power to speak. I
charge you now,
When you shall see her, tell her that I
died
Blessing her, praying for her, loving
her ;
Save for the bar between us, loving
her
As when she laid her head beside my
own.
And tell my daughter Annie, whom I
saw
So like her mother, that my latest
breath
Was spent in blessing her and pray-
ing for her.
And tell my son that I died blessing
him.
And say to Philip that I blest him
too ;
He never meant us anything but good.
But if my children care to see me
dead,
Who hardly knew me living, let them
come,
I am their father ; but she must not
come,
For my dead face would vex her after-
life.
And now there is but one of all my
blood
Who will embrace me in the world-to-
be.
This hair is his, she cut it off and
gave it,
And I have borne it with me all these
years,
And thought to bear it with me to my
grave ;
But now my mind is changed, for I
shall see him,

My babe in bliss. Wherefore when I
am gone,
Take, give her this, for it may com-
fort her ;
It will moreover be a token to her
That I am he.'

He ceased ; and Miriam Lane
Made such a voluble answer promis-
ing all,
That once again he roll'd his eyes upon
her
Repeating all he wish'd, and once
again
She promised.

Then the third night after this,
While Enoch slumber'd motionless
and pale,
And Miriam watch'd and dozed at in-
tervals,
There came so loud a calling of the
sea
That all the houses in the haven rang.
He woke, he rose, he spread his arms
abroad,
Crying with a loud voice, 'A sail ! a
sail !
I am saved ;' and so fell back and
spoke no more.

So past the strong heroic soul away.
And when they buried him the little
port
Had seldom seen a costlier funeral.

AYLMER'S FIELD

1793

Dust are our frames ; and, gilded
dust, our pride
Looks only for a moment whole and
sound,
Like that long buried body of the king,
Found lying with his urns and orna-
ments,
Which at a touch of light, an air of
heaven,
Slipt into ashes, and was found no
more.

Here is a story which in rougher
shape
Came from a grizzled cripple, whom I
saw

Sunning himself in a waste field
 alone —
 Old, and a mine of memories—who
 had served,
 Long since, a bygone rector of the
 place,
 And been himself a part of what he
 told.

SIR AYLMER AYLMER, that al-
 mighty man,
 The county God—in whose capacious
 hall,
 Hung with a hundred shields, the
 family tree
 Sprang from the midriff of a prostrate
 king—
 Whose blazing wyvern weathercock'd
 the spire,
 Stood from his walls and wing'd his
 entry-gates,
 And swang besides on many a windy
 sign—
 Whose eyes from under a pyramidal
 head
 Saw from his windows nothing save
 his own—
 What lovelier of his own had he than
 her,
 His only child, his Edith, whom he
 loved
 As heiress and not heir regretfully?
 But 'he that marries or marries her
 name.'
 This fiat somewhat soothed himself
 and wife,
 His wife a faded beauty of the Baths,
 Insipid as the queen upon a card;
 Her all of thought and bearing hardly
 more
 Than his own shadow in a sickly sun.

A land of hops and poppy-mingled
 corn,
 Little about it stirring save a brook!
 A sleepy land, where under the same
 wheel
 The same old rut would deepen year
 by year;
 Where almost all the village had one
 name;
 Where Aylmer followed Aylmer at
 the Hall
 And Averill Averill at the Rectory
 Thrice over; so that Rectory and Hall,
 Bound in an immemorial intimacy,

Were open to each other; tho' to
 dream
 That Love could bind them closer well
 had made
 The hoar hair of the baronet bristle up
 With horror, worse than had he heard
 his priest
 Preach an inverted scripture, sons of
 men,
 Daughters of God; so sleepy was the
 land.

And might not Averill, had he will'd
 it so,
 Somewhere beneath his own low range
 of roofs,
 Have also set his many-shielded tree?
 There was an Aylmer-Averill marriage
 once,
 When the red rose was redder than
 itself,
 And York's white rose as red as Lan-
 caster's,
 With wounded peace which each had
 prick'd to death.
 'Not proven,' Averill said, or laugh-
 ingly,
 'Some other race of Averills'—proven
 or no,
 What cared he? what, if other or the
 same?
 He lean'd not on his fathers but him-
 self.

But Leolin, his brother, living oft
 With Averill, and a year or two before
 Call'd to the bar, but ever call'd away
 By one low voice to one hear neigh-
 borhood,
 Would often, in his walks with Edith,
 claim
 A distant kinship to the gracious blood
 That shook the heart of Edith hearing
 him.

Sanguine he was; a but less vivid
 hue
 Than of that islet in the chestnut-
 bloom
 Flamed in his cheek; and eager eyes,
 that still
 Took joyful note of all things joyful,
 beam'd,
 Beneath a mane-like mass of rolling
 gold,
 Their best and brightest when they
 dwelt on hers,

Edith, whose pensive beauty, perfect
 else, 70
 But subject to the season or the mood,
 Shone like a mystic star between the
 less
 And greater glory varying to and fro,
 We know not wherefore; bounteously
 made,
 And yet so finely, that a troublous
 touch
 Thinn'd, or would seem to thin her in
 a day,
 A joyous to dilate, as toward the light.
 And these had been together from the
 first.
 Leolin's first nurse was, five years after,
 hers.
 So much the boy foreran; but when
 his date 80
 Doubled her own, for want of play-
 mates, he —
 Since Averill was a decad and a half
 His elder, and their parents under-
 ground —
 Had tost his ball and flown his kite,
 and roll'd
 His hoop to pleasure Edith, with her
 dipt
 Against the rush of the air in the prone
 swing,
 Made blossom-ball or daisy-chain, ar-
 ranged
 Her garden, sow'd her name and kept
 it green
 In living letters, told her fairy-tales,
 Show'd her the fairy footings on the
 grass, 90
 The little dells of cowslip, fairy palms,
 The petty mare's-tail forest, fairy
 pines,
 Or from the tiny pitted target blew
 What look'd a flight of fairy arrows
 aim'd
 All at one mark, all hitting, make-
 believes
 For Edith and himself; or else he
 forged,
 But that was later, boyish histories
 Of battle, bold adventure, dungeon,
 wreck,
 Flights, terrors, sudden rescues, and
 true love
 Crown'd after trial; sketches rude and
 faint, 100
 But where a passion yet unborn per-
 haps

Lay hidden as the music of the moon
 Sleeps in the plain eggs of the night-
 ingale.
 And thus together, save for college-
 times
 Or Temple-eaten terms, a couple, fair
 As ever painter painted, poet sang,
 Or heaven in lavish bounty moulded,
 grew.
 And more and more, the maiden woman-
 grown,
 He wasted hours with Averill; there,
 when first 109
 The tented winter-field was broken up
 Into that phalanx of the summer spears
 That soon should wear the garland;
 there again
 When burr and bine were gather'd;
 lastly there
 At Christmas; ever welcome at the
 Hall,
 On whose dull sameness his full tide
 of youth
 Broke with a phosphorescence charm-
 ing even
 My lady, and the baronet yet had
 laid
 No bar between them. Dull and self-
 involved,
 Tall and erect, but bending from his
 height
 With half-allowing smiles for all the
 world, 120
 And mighty courteous in the main —
 his pride
 Lay deeper than to wear it as his ring —
 He, like an Aylmer in his Aylmerism,
 Would care no more for Leolin's walk-
 ing with her
 Than for his old Newfoundland's, when
 they ran
 To loose him at the stables, for he rose
 Two-footed at the limit of his chain,
 Roaring to make a third; and how
 should Love,
 Whom the cross lightnings of four
 chance-met eyes
 Flash into fiery life from nothing, fol-
 low 130
 Such dear familiarities of dawn?
 Seldom, but when he does, master of
 all.
 So these young hearts, not knowing
 that they loved,
 Not she at least, nor conscious of a bar

Between them, nor by plight or broken
ring
Bound, but an immemorial intimacy,
Wander'd at will, and oft accompanied
By Averill; his, a brother's love, that
hung
With wings of brooding shelter o'er
her peace,
Might have been other, save for Leo-
lin's —¹⁴⁰
Who knows? but so they wander'd,
hour by hour
Gather'd the blossom that re-bloom'd,
and drank
The magic cup that fill'd itself anew.

A whisper half reveal'd her to her-
self.
For out beyond her lodges, where the
brook
Vocal, with here and there a silence,
ran
By sallowy rims, arose the laborers'
homes,
A frequent haunt of Edith, on low
knolls
That dimpling died into each other,
huts
At random scatter'd, each a nest in
bloom.¹⁵⁰
Her art, her hand, her counsel, all had
wrought
About them. Here was one that, sum-
mer-blanch'd,
Was parcel-bearded with the travel-
ler's-joy
In autumn, parcel ivy-clad; and here
The warm-blue breathings of a hid-
den hearth
Broke from a bower of vine and
honeysuckle.
One look'd all rose-tree, and another
wore
A close-set robe of jasmine sown with
stars.
This had a rosy sea of gillyflowers
About it; this, a milky-way on earth,
Like visions in the Northern dreamer's
heavens,¹⁶¹
A hly-avenue climbing to the doors;
One, almost to the martin-haunted
eaves
A summer burial deep in hollyhocks;
Each, its own charm; and Edith's
everywhere;
And Edith ever visitant with him,

He but less loved than Edith, of her
poor.
For she — so lowly-lovely and so lov-
ing,
Queenly responsive when the loyal
hand
Rose from the clay it work'd in as she
past,¹⁷⁰
Not sowing hedgerow texts and pass-
ing by,
Nor dealing goodly counsel from a
height
That makes the lowest hate it, but a
voice
Of comfort and an open hand of help,
A splendid presence flattering the
poor roofs
Revered as theirs, but kindlier than
themselves
To ailing wife or wailing infancy
Or old bedridden palsy, — was adored;
He, loved for her and for himself. A
grasp
Having the warmth and muscle of the
heart,¹⁸⁰
A childly way with children, and a
laugh
Ringing like proven golden coinage
true,
Were no false passport to that easy
realm,
Where once with Leolin at her side
the girl,
Nursing a child, and turning to the
warmth
The tender pink five-beaded baby-soles,
Heard the good mother softly whisper,
'Bless,
God bless 'em! marriages are made in
heaven.'

A flash of semi-jealousy clear'd it
to her.
My lady's Indian kinsman unan-
nounced¹⁹⁰
With half a score of swarthy faces
came.
His own, tho' keen and bold and sol-
dierly,
Scar'd by the close ecliptic, was not
fair;
Fairer his talk, a tongue that ruled
the hour,
Tho' seeming boastful. So when first
he dash'd
Into the chronicle of a deedful day,

Sir Aylmer half forgot his lazy smile
Of patron, 'Good! my lady's kins-
man! good!' ¹⁹⁸

My lady with her fingers interlock'd
And rotatory thumbs on silken knees,
Call'd all her vital spirits into each ear
To listen; unawares they flitted off,
Busying themselves about the flower-
age

That stood from out a stiff brocade in
which,
The meteor of a splendid season, she,
Once with this kinsman, ah! so long
ago,
Stept thro' the stately minuet of those
days.

But Edith's eager fancy hurried with
him

Snatch'd thro' the perilous passes of
his life;

Till Leolin, ever watchful of her eye,
Hated him with a momentary hate. ²¹¹
Wife-hunting, as the rumor ran, was
he.

I know not, for he spoke not, only
shower'd

His oriental gifts on every one
And most on Edith. Like a storm he
came,

And shook the house, and like a storm
he went.

Among the gifts he left her — pos-
sibly
He flow'd and ebb'd uncertain, to re-
turn

When others had been tested — there
was one,

A dagger, in rich sheath with jewels
on it ²²⁰

Sprinkled about in gold that branch'd
itself

Fine as ice-ferns on January panes
Made by a breath. I know not whence
at first,

Nor of what race, the work; but as
he told

The story, storming a hill-fort of
thieves

He got it; for their captain after fight,
His comrades having fought their last
below,

Was climbing up the valley, at whom
he shot.

Down from the beetling crag to which
he clung

Tumbled the tawny rascal at his feet,
This dagger with him, which, when
now admired ²³¹

By Edith whom his pleasure was to
please,

At once the costly Sahib yielded to
her.

And Leolin, coming after he was
gone,

Tost over all her presents petulantly;
And when she show'd the wealthy
scabbard, saying,

'Look what a lovely piece of work-
manship!'

Slight was his answer, 'Well — I care
not for it.'

Then playing with the blade he prick'd
his hand,

'A gracious gift to give a lady, this!'
'But would it be more gracious,' ask'd
the girl, ²⁴¹

'Were I to give this gift of his to one
That is no lady?' 'Gracious? No,'
said he.

'Me? — but I cared not for it. O,
pardon me,

I seem to be ungraciousness itself.'

'Take it,' she added sweetly, 'tho'
his gift;

For I am more ungracious even than
you,

I care not for it either;' and he said,
'Why, then I love it;' but Sir Aylmer

past,
And neither loved nor liked the thing
he heard. ²⁵⁰

The next day came a neighbor.
Blues and reds

They talk'd of; blues were sure of it,
he thought;

Then of the latest fox — where started
— kill'd

In such a bottom. 'Peter had the
brush,

My Peter, first;' and did Sir Aylmer
know

That great pock-pitten fellow had
been caught?

Then made his pleasure echo, hand to
hand,

And rolling as it were the substance
of it

Between his palms a moment up and
down —

'The birds were warm, the birds were
 warm upon him ; ²⁶⁰
 We have him now ;' and had Sir Ayl-
 mer heard—
 Nay, but he must—the land was
 ringing of it—
 This blacksmith border-marriage—
 one they knew—
 Raw from the nursery—who could
 trust a child ?
 That cursed France with her egalities !
 And did Sir Aylmer—deferentially
 With nearing chair and lower'd accent
 — think—
 For people talk'd—that it was wholly
 wise
 To let that handsome fellow Averill
 walk
 So freely with his daughter ? people
 talk'd— ²⁷⁰
 The boy might get a notion into
 him ;
 The girl might be entangled ere she
 knew.
 Sir Aylmer Aylmer slowly stiffening
 spoke :
 'The girl and boy, sir, know their
 differences !'
 'Good,' said his friend, 'but watch !'
 and he, 'Enough,
 More than enough, sir ! I can guard
 my own.'
 They parted, and Sir Aylmer Aylmer
 watch'd.

Pale, for on her the thunders of the
 house
 Had fallen first, was Edith that same
 night ;
 Pale as the Jephtha's daughter, a
 rough piece ²⁸⁰
 Of early rigid color, under which
 Withdrawing by the counter door to
 that
 Which Leolin open'd, she cast back
 upon him
 A piteous glance, and vanish'd. He,
 as one
 Caught in a burst of unexpected storm,
 And pelted with outrageous epithets,
 Turning beheld the Powers of the
 House
 On either side the hearth, indignant ;
 her,
 Cooling her false cheek with a feather
 fan,

Him, glaring, by his own stale devil
 spur'd, ²⁹⁰
 And, like a beast hard-ridden, breath-
 ing hard.
 'Ungenerous, dishonorable, base,
 Presumptuous ! trusted as he was with
 her,
 The sole succeder to their wealth,
 their lands,
 The last remaining pillar of their
 house,
 The one transmitter of their ancient
 name,
 Their child,' 'Our child !' 'Our
 heiress !' 'Ours !' for still,
 Like echoes from beyond a hollow,
 came
 Her sicklier iteration. Last he said :
 'Boy, mark me ! for your fortunes
 are to make. ³⁰⁰
 I swear you shall not make them out
 of mine.
 Now inasmuch as you have practised
 on her,
 Perplex her, made her half forget
 herself,
 Swerve from her duty to herself and
 us—
 Things in an Aylmer deem'd impossi-
 ble,
 Far as we track ourselves—I say that
 this—
 Else I withdraw favor and counte-
 nance
 From you and yours for ever—shall
 you do.
 Sir, when you see her—but you shall
 not see her—
 No, you shall write, and not to her,
 but me ; ³¹⁰
 And you shall say that having spoken
 with me,
 And after look'd into yourself, you
 find
 That you meant nothing—as indeed
 you know
 That you meant nothing. Such a
 match as this !
 Impossible, prodigious !' These were
 words,
 As meted by his measure of himself,
 Arguing boundless forbearance : after
 which,
 And Leolin's horror-stricken answer, 'I
 So foul a traitor to myself and her !
 Never, O, never !' for about as long

As the wind-hover hangs in balance,
 paused 321
 Sir Aylmer reddening from the storm
 within,
 Then broke all bonds of courtesy, and
 crying,
 'Boy, should I find you by my doors
 again,
 My men shall lash you from them like
 a dog;
 Hence!' with a sudden execration
 drove
 The footstool from before him, and
 arose;
 So, stammering 'scoundrel' out of
 teeth that ground
 As in a dreadful dream, while Leolin
 still
 Retreated half-aghast, the fierce old
 man 330
 Follow'd, and under his own lintel
 stood
 Storming with lifted hands, a hoary
 face
 Meet for the reverence of the hearth,
 but now,
 Beneath a pale and unimpassion'd
 moon,
 Vext with unworthy madness, and
 deform'd.

Slowly and conscious of the rageful
 eye
 That watch'd him, till he heard the
 ponderous door
 Close, crashing with long echoes thro'
 the land,
 Went Leolin; then, his passions all in
 flood
 And masters of his motion, furiously
 Down thro' the bright lawns to his
 brother's ran, 341
 And foam'd away his heart at Aver-
 ill's ear;
 Whom Averill solaced as he might,
 amazed:
 The man was his, had been his father's
 friend;
 He must have seen, himself had seen
 it long;
 He must have known, himself had
 known; besides,
 He never yet had set his daughter
 forth
 Here in the woman-markets of the
 west,

Where our Caucasians let themselves
 be sold.
 Some one, he thought, had slander'd
 Leolin to him. 350
 'Brother, for I have loved you more
 as son
 Than brother, let me tell you: I my-
 self—
 What is their pretty saying? jilted, is
 it?
 Jilted I was; I say it for your peace.
 Pain'd, and, as bearing in myself the
 shame
 The woman should have borne, hu-
 miliated,
 I lived for years a stunted sunless
 life;
 Till after our good parents past away
 Watching your growth, I seem'd again
 to grow. 359
 Leolin, I almost sin in envying you.
 The very whitest lamb in all my fold
 Loves you; I know her; the worst
 thought she has
 Is whiter even than her pretty hand.
 She must prove true; for, brother,
 where two fight
 The strongest wins, and truth and
 love are strength,
 And you are happy; let her parents
 be.'

But Leolin cried out the more upon
 them—
 Insolent, brainless, heartless! heiress,
 wealth,
 Their wealth, their heiress! wealth
 enough was theirs
 For twenty matches. Were he lord
 of this, 370
 Why, twenty boys and girls should
 marry on it,
 And forty blest ones bless him, and
 himself
 Be wealthy still, ay, wealthier. He
 believed
 This filthy marriage-hindering Mam-
 mon made
 The harlot of the cities; Nature crost
 Was mother of the foul adulteries
 That saturate soul with body. Name,
 too! name,
 Their ancient name! they *might* be
 proud; its worth
 'Was being Edith's. Ah, how pale
 she had look'd



AYLMER HALL

<p>Darling, to-night! they must have rated her 380 Beyond all tolerance. These old pheasant-lords, These partridge-breeders of a thou- sand years, Who had mildew'd in their thousands, doing nothing Since Egbert — why, the greater their disgrace! Fall back upon a name! rest, rot in that! Not <i>keep</i> it noble, make it nobler? fools, With such a vantage-ground for noble- ness! He had known a man, a quintessence of man, The life of all — who madly loved — and he, Thwarted by one of these old father- fools, 390 Had rited his life out, and made an end.</p>	<p>He would not do it! her sweet face and faith Held him from that; but he had pow- ers, he knew it. Back would he to his studies, make a name, Name, fortune too; the world should ring of him, To shame these mouldy Aylmers in their graves. Chancellor, or what is greatest would he be — 'O brother, I am grieved to learn your grief — Give me my fling, and let me say my say.'</p> <p style="text-align: right;">At which, like one that sees his own excess, 400 And easily forgives it as his own, He laugh'd, and then was mute, but presently Wept like a storm; and honest Aver ill, seeing</p>
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How low his brother's mood had fallen,
 fetch'd
 His richest bee's-wing from a binn re-
 served
 For banquets, praised the waning red,
 and told
 The vintage — when *this* Aylmer came
 of age —
 Then drank and past it; till at length
 the two,
 Tho' Leolin flamed and fell again,
 agreed
 That much allowance must be made
 for men.
 After an angry dream this kindlier
 glow
 Faded with morning, but his purpose
 held.

Yet once by night again the lovers
 met,
 A perilous meeting under the tall
 pines
 That darken'd all the northward of
 her Hall.
 Him, to her meek and modest bosom
 prest
 In agony, she promised that no force,
 Persuasion, no, nor death could alter
 her;
 He, passionately hopefuller, would go,
 Labor for his own Edith, and return
 In such a sunlight of prosperity
 He should not be rejected. 'Write
 to me!
 They loved me, and because I love
 their child
 They hate me. There is war between
 us, dear,
 Which breaks all bonds but ours; we
 must remain
 Sacred to one another.' So they
 talk'd,
 Poor children, for their comfort. The
 wind blew,
 The rain of heaven and their own bit-
 ter tears,
 Tears and the careless rain of heaven,
 mixt
 Upon their faces, as they kiss'd each
 other
 In darkness, and above them roar'd
 the pine.

So Leolin went; and as we task
 ourselves

To learn a language known but smat-
 teringly
 In phrases here and there at random,
 toil'd
 Mastering the lawless science of our
 law,
 That codeless myriad of precedent,
 That wilderness of single instances,
 Thro' which a few, by wit or fortune
 led,
 May beat a pathway out to wealth
 and fame.
 The jests, that flash'd about the plead-
 er's room,
 Lightning of the hour, the pun, the
 scurrilous tale, —
 Old scandals buried now seven decads
 deep
 In other scandals that have lived and
 died,
 And left the living scandal that shall
 die —
 Were dead to him already; bent as he
 was
 To make disproof of scorn, and strong
 in hopes,
 And prodigal of all brain-labor he,
 Charier of sleep, and wine, and exer-
 cise,
 Except when for a breathing-while at
 eve,
 Some niggard fraction of an hour, he
 ran
 Beside the river-bank. And then in-
 deed
 Harder the times were, and the hands
 of power
 Were bloodier, and the according
 hearts of men
 Seem'd harder too; but the soft river-
 breeze,
 Which fann'd the gardens of that
 rival rose
 Yet fragrant in a heart remembering
 His former talks with Edith, on him
 breathed
 Far purer in his rushings to and
 fro,
 After his books, to flush his blood with
 air,
 Then to his books again. My lady's
 cousin,
 Half-sickening of his pension'd after-
 noon,
 Drove in upon the student once or
 twice,

Ran a Malayan amuck against the
 times,
 Had golden hopes for France and all
 mankind,
 Answer'd all queries touching those at
 home
 With a heaved shoulder and a saucy
 smile,
 And fain had haled him out into the
 world,
 And air'd him there. His nearer
 friend would say,
 'Screw not the chord too sharply lest
 it snap.'
 Then left alone he pluck'd her dagger
 forth ⁴⁷⁰
 From where his worldless heart had
 kept it warm,
 Kissing his vows upon it like a knight.
 And wrinkled benchers often talk'd of
 him
 Approvingly, and prophesied his rise;
 For heart, I think, help'd head. Her
 letters too,
 Tho' far between, and coming fitfully
 Like broken music, written as she
 found
 Or made occasion, being strictly
 watch'd,
 Charm'd him thro' every labyrinth till
 he saw
 An end, a hope, a light breaking upon
 him. ⁴⁸⁰

But they that cast her spirit into
 flesh,
 Her worldly-wise begetters, plagued
 themselves
 To sell her, those good parents, for her
 good.
 Whatever eldest-born of rank or wealth
 Might lie within their compass, him
 they lured
 Into their net made pleasant by the
 baits
 Of gold and beauty, wooing him to
 woo.
 So month by month the noise about
 their doors,
 And distant blaze of those dull ban-
 quets, made
 The nightly wirer of their innocent
 hare ⁴⁹⁰
 Falter before he took it. All in vain.
 Sullen, defiant, pitying, wrath, re-
 turn'd

Leolin's rejected rivals from their suit
 So often, that the folly taking wings
 Slipt o'er those lazy limits down the
 wind
 With rumor, and became in other
 fields
 A mockery to the yeomen over ale,
 And laughter to their lords. But those
 at home,
 As hunters round a hunted creature
 draw
 The cordon close and closer toward
 the death, ⁵⁰⁰
 Narrow'd her goings out and comings
 in;
 Forbade her first the house of Averill,
 Then closed her access to the wealth-
 ier farms,
 Last from her own home-circle of the
 poor
 They barr'd her. Yet she bore it, yet
 her cheek
 Kept color — wondrous! but, O mys-
 tery!
 What amulet drew her down to that
 old oak,
 So old, that twenty years before, a
 part
 Falling had let appear the brand of
 John —
 Once grove-like, each huge arm a tree,
 but now ⁵¹⁰
 The broken base of a black tower, a
 cave
 Of touchwood, with a single flourish-
 ing spray.
 There the manorial lord too curiously
 Raking in that millennial touchwood-
 dust
 Found for himself a bitter treasure
 trove;
 Burst his own wyvern on the seal, and
 read
 Writhing a letter from his child, for
 which
 Came at the moment Leolin's emis-
 sary,
 A crippled lad, and coming turn'd to
 fly,
 But scared with threats of jail and
 halter gave ⁵²⁰
 To him that fluster'd his poor parish
 wits
 The letter which he brought, and
 swore besides
 To play their go-between as heretofore

Nor let them know themselves be-
tray'd; and then,
Soul-stricken at their kindness to him,
went
Hating his own lean heart and miser-
able.

Thenceforward oft from out a des-
pot dream
The father panting woke, and oft, as
dawn
Aroused the black republic on his
elms,
Sweeping the froth-fly from the fescue
brush'd 530
Thro' the dim meadow toward his
treasure-trove,
Seized it, took home, and to my lady,
— who made
A downward crescent of her minion
mouth,
Listless in all despondence, — read;
and tore,
As if the living passion symbol'd
there
Were living nerves to feel the rent;
and burnt,
Now chafing at his own great self de-
fied,
Now striking on huge stumbling-
blocks of scorn
In babyisms and dear diminutives
Scatter'd all over the vocabulary 540
Of such a love as like a chidden child,
After much wailing, hush'd itself at
last
Hopeless of answer. Then tho' Aver-
ill wrote
And bade him with good heart sus-
tain himself —
All would be well — the lover heeded
not,
But passionately restless came and
went,
And rustling once at night about the
place,
There by a keeper shot at, slightly
hurt,
Raging return'd. Nor was it well for
her
Kept to the garden now, and grove of
pines, 550
Watch'd even there; and one was set
to watch
The watcher, and Sir Aylmer watch'd
them all,

Yet bitterer from his readings. Once
indeed,
Warm'd with his wines, or taking
pride in her,
She look'd so sweet, he kiss'd her ten-
derly,
Not knowing what possess'd him.
That one kiss
Was Leolin's one strong rival upon
earth;
Seconded, for my lady follow'd suit,
Seem'd hope's returning rose; and
then ensued
A Martin's summer of his faded
love, 560
Or ordeal by kindness. After this
He seldom crost his child without a
sneer;
The mother flow'd in shallower acri-
monies,
Never one kindly smile, one kindly
word;
So that the gentle creature shut from
all
Her charitable use, and face to face
With twenty months of silence, slowly
lost,
Nor greatly cared to lose, her hold on
life,
Last some low fever ranging round to
spy
The weakness of a people or a
house, 570
Like flies that haunt a wound, or deer,
or men,
Or almost all that is, hurting the
hurt —
Save Christ as we believe him — found
the girl
And flung her down upon a couch of
fire,
Where careless of the household faces
near,
And crying upon the name of Leolin,
She, and with her the race of Aylmer,
past.

Star to star vibrates light; may soul
to soul
Strike thro' a finer element of her own?
So, — from afar, — touch as at once?
or why 580
That night, that moment, when she
named his name,
Did the keen shriek, 'Yes, love, yes,
Edith, yes,'

Shrill, till the comrade of his chambers
 woke,
 And came upon him half-arisen from
 sleep,
 With a weird bright eye, sweating and
 trembling,
 His hair as it were crackling into flames,
 His body half flung forward in pur-
 suit,
 And his long arms stretch'd as to grasp
 a flyer.
 Nor knew he wherefore he had made
 the cry;
 And being much befoo'd and idi-
 oted ⁵⁹⁰
 By the rough amity of the other,
 sank
 As into sleep again. The second day,
 My lady's Indian kinsman rushing in,
 A breaker of the bitter news from
 home,
 Found a dead man, a letter edged
 with death
 Beside him, and the dagger which
 himself
 Gave Edith, redden'd with no bandit's
 blood;
 'From Edith' was engraven on the
 blade.

Then Averill went and gazed upon
 his death.
 And when he came again, his flock be-
 lieved — ⁶⁰⁰
 Beholding how the years which are
 not Time's
 Had blasted him — that many thou-
 sand days
 Were clipt by horror from his term of
 life.
 Yet the sad mother, for the second
 death
 Scarce touch'd her thro' that nearness
 of the first,
 And being used to find her pastor
 texts,
 Sent to the harrow'd brother, praying
 him
 To speak before the people of her child,
 And fix the Sabbath. Darkly that
 day rose.
 Autumn's mock sunshine of the faded
 woods ⁶¹⁰
 Was all the life of it; for hard on these,
 A breathless burthen of low-folded
 heavens

Stifled and chill'd at once; but every
 roof
 Sent out a listener. Many too had
 known
 Edith among the hamlets round, and
 since
 The parents' harshness and the hapless
 loves
 And double death were widely mur-
 mur'd, left
 Their own gray tower, or plain-face'd
 tabernacle,
 To hear him; all in mourning these,
 and those
 With blots of it about them, ribbon,
 glove, ⁶²⁰
 Or kerchief; while the church, — one
 night, except
 For greenish glimmerings thro' the
 lancets, — made
 Still paler the pale head of him, who
 tower'd
 Above them, with his hopes in either
 grave.

Long o'er his bent brows linger'd
 Averill,
 His face magnetic to the land from
 which
 Livid he pluck'd it forth, and labor'd
 thro'
 His brief prayer-prelude, gave the
 verse, 'Behold,
 Your house is left unto you desolate!'
 But lapsed into so long a pause again
 As half amazed, half frightened, all his
 flock; ⁶³¹
 Then from his height and loneliness of
 grief
 Bore down in flood, and dash'd his
 angry heart
 Against the desolations of the world.

Never since our bad earth became
 one sea,
 Which rolling o'er the palaces of the
 proud,
 And all but those who knew the living
 God —
 Eight that were left to make a purer
 world —
 When since had flood, fire, earthquake,
 thunder, wrought
 Such waste and havoc as the idola-
 tries ⁶⁴⁰
 Which from the low light of mortality

Shot up their shadows to the heaven
of heavens,

And worshipt their own darkness in
the Highest?

'Gash thyself, priest, and honor thy
brute Baal,

And to thy worst self sacrifice thyself,
For with thy worst self hast thou
clothed thy God.

Then came a Lord in no wise like to
Baal.

The babe shall lead the lion. Surely
now

The wilderness shall blossom as the
rose.

Crown thyself, worm, and worship
thine own lusts! — ⁶⁵⁰

No coarse and blockish God of acreage
Stands at thy gate for thee to grovel
to —

Thy God is far diffused in noble groves
And princely halls, and farms, and
flowing lawns,

And heaps of living gold that daily
grow,

And title-scrolls and gorgeous herald-
ries.

In such a shape dost thou behold thy
God.

Thou wilt not gash thy flesh for *him*;
for thine

Fares richly, in fine linen, not a hair
Ruffled upon the scarfskin, even while
The deathless ruler of thy dying house
Is wounded to the death that cannot
die; ⁶⁶²

And tho' thou numberest with the
followers

Of One who cried, "Leave all and
follow me."

Thee therefore with His light about
thy feet,

Thee with His message ringing in thine
ears,

Thee shall thy brother man, the Lord
from heaven,

Born of a village girl, carpenter's son,
Wonderful, Prince of Peace, the
Mighty God,

Count the more base idolater of the
two; ⁶⁷⁰

Crueller, as not passing thro' the fire
Bodies, but souls — thy children's —
thro' the smoke,

The blight of low desires — darkening
thine own

To thine own likeness; or if one of
these,

Thy better born unhappily from thee,
Should, as by miracle, grow straight
and fair —

Friends, I was bid to speak to such a
one

By those who most have cause to sor-
row for her —

Fairer than Rachel by the palmy well.
Fairer than Ruth among the fields of

corn, ⁶⁸⁰
Fair as the Angel that said "Hail!"

she seem'd,
Who entering fill'd the house with sud-
den light.

For so mine own was brighten'd —
where indeed

The roof so lowly but that beam of
heaven

Dawn'd sometime thro' the doorway?
whose the babe

Too ragged to be fondled on her lap,
Warm'd at her bosom? The poor child

of shame,
The common care whom no one cared
for, leapt

To greet her, wasting his forgotten
heart,

As with the mother he had never
known, ⁶⁹⁰

In gambols; for her fresh and inno-
cent eyes

Had such a star of morning in their
blue,

That all neglected places of the field
Broke into nature's music when they

saw her.
Low was her voice, but won mysteri-
ous way

Thro' the seal'd ear to which a louder
one

Was all but silence — free of alms her
hand —

The hand that rob'd your cottage-
walls with flowers

Has often toil'd to clothe your little
ones;

How often placed upon the sick man's
brow ⁷⁰⁰

Cool'd it, or laid his feverish pillow
smooth!

Had you one sorrow and she shared it
not?

One burthen and she would not lighten
it?

One spiritual doubt she did not soothe ?
 Or when some heat of difference spark-
 kled out,
 How sweetly would she glide between
 your wraths,
 And steal you from each other ! for
 she walk'd
 Wearing the light yoke of that Lord
 of love
 Whostill'd the rolling wave of Galilee !
 And one — of him I was not bid to
 speak — 710
 Was always with her, whom you also
 knew.
 Him too you loved, for he was worthy
 love.
 And these had been together from the
 first ;
 They might have been together till
 the last.
 Friends, this frail bark of ours, when
 sorely tried,
 May wreck itself without the pilot's
 guilt,
 Without the captain's knowledge ;
 hope with me.
 Whose shame is that, if he went hence
 with shame ?
 Nor mine the fault, if losing both of
 these
 I cry to vacant chairs and widow'd
 walls, 720
 "My house is left unto me desolate."

While thus he spoke, his hearers
 wept ; but some,
 Sons of the glebe, with other frowns
 than those
 That knit themselves for summer
 shadow, scowl'd
 At their great lord. He, when it
 seem'd he saw
 No pale sheet-lightnings from afar,
 but fork'd
 Of the near storm, and aiming at his
 head,
 Sat anger-charm'd from sorrow, sol-
 dier-like,
 Erect ; but when the preacher's ca-
 dence flow'd
 Softening thro' all the gentle attri-
 butes 730
 Of his lost child, the wife, who watch'd
 his face,
 Paled at a sudden twitch of his iron
 mouth ;

And 'O, pray God that he hold up !'
 she thought,
 'Or surely I shall shame myself and
 him.'

'Nor yours the blame — for who
 beside your hearths
 Can take her place — if echoing me
 you cry
 "Our house is left unto us desolate" ?
 But thou, O thou that killest, hadst
 thou known,
 O thou that stonest, hadst thou under-
 stood
 The things belonging to thy peace and
 ours ! 740
 Is there no prophet but the voice that
 calls
 Doom upon kings, or in the waste "Re-
 pent" ?
 Is not our own child on the narrow
 way,
 Who down to those that saunter in
 the broad
 Cries, "Come up hither," as a prophet
 to us ?
 Is there no stoning save with flint and
 rock ?
 Yes, as the dead we weep for testify —
 No desolation but by sword and fire ?
 Yes, as your moanings witness, and
 myself
 Am lonelier, darker, earthlier for my
 loss. 750
 Give me your prayers, for he is past
 your prayers,
 Not past the living fount of pity in
 heaven.
 But I that thought myself long-suf-
 fering, meek,
 Exceeding "poor in spirit" — how the
 words
 Have twisted back upon themselves,
 and mean
 Vileness, we are grown so proud — I
 wish'd my voice
 A rushing tempest of the wrath of
 God
 To blow these sacrifices thro' the
 world —
 Sent like the twelve-divided concubine
 To inflame the tribes ; but there —
 out yonder — earth 760
 Lightens from her own central hell —
 O, there
 The red fruit of an old idolatry —

The heads of chiefs and princes fall
 so fast,
 They cling together in the ghastly
 sack —
 The land all shambles — naked mar-
 riages
 Flash from the bridge, and ever-
 murder'd France,
 By shores that darken with the gather-
 ing wolf,
 Runs in a river of blood to the sick
 sea.
 Is this a time to madden madness then ?
 Was this a time for these to flaunt
 their pride ? 770
 May Pharaoh's darkness, folds as
 dense as those
 Which hid the Holiest from the peo-
 ple's eyes
 Ere the great death, shroud this great
 sin from all !
 Doubtless our narrow world must
 canvass it.
 O, rather pray for those and pity
 them,
 Who, thro' their own desire accom-
 plish'd, bring
 Their own gray hairs with sorrow to
 the grave —
 Who broke the bond which they de-
 sired to break,
 Which else had link'd their race with
 times to come —
 Who wove coarse webs to snare her
 purity, 780
 Grossly contriving their dear daugh-
 ter's good —
 Poor souls, and knew not what they
 did, but sat
 Ignorant, devising their own daugh-
 ter's death !
 May not that earthly chastisement
 suffice ?
 Have not our love and reverence left
 them bare ?
 Will not another take their heritage ?
 Will there be children's laughter in
 their hall
 For ever and for ever, or one stone
 Left on another, or is it a light thing
 That I, their guest, their host, their
 ancient friend, 790
 I made by these the last of all my
 race,
 Must cry to these the last of theirs, as
 cried

Christ ere His agony to those that
 swore
 Not by the temple but the gold, and
 made
 Their own traditions God, and slew
 the Lord,
 And left their memories a world's
 curse — "Behold,
 Your house is left unto you deso-
 late" ?'

 Ended he had not, but she brook'd
 no more,
 Long since her heart had beat remorse-
 lessly,
 Her cramped-up sorrow pain'd her, and
 a sense 800
 Of meanness in her unresisting life.
 Then their eyes vex'd her ; for on en-
 tering
 He had cast the curtains of their seat
 aside —
 Black velvet of the costliest — she her-
 self
 Had seen to that. Fain had she closed
 them now,
 Yet dared not stir to do it, only
 near'd
 Her husband inch by inch, but when
 she laid,
 Wifelike, her hand in one of his, he
 veil'd
 His face with the other, and at once,
 as falls
 A creeper when the prop is broken,
 fell 810
 The woman shrieking at his feet, and
 swoon'd.
 Then her own people bore along the
 nave
 Her pendent hands, and narrow mea-
 gre face
 Seam'd with the shallow cares of fifty
 years.
 And her the lord of all the landscape
 round
 Even to its last horizon, and of all
 Who peer'd at him so keenly, follow'd
 out
 Tall and erect, but in the middle aisle
 Reel'd, as a footsore ox in crowded
 ways
 Stumbling across the market to his
 death, 820
 Uaptied ; for he groped as blind, and
 seem'd

Always about to fall, grasping the
pews
And oaken finials till he touch'd the
door ;
Yet to the lychgate, where his chariot
stood,
Strode from the porch, tall and erect
again.

But nevermore did either pass the
gate
Save under pall with bearers In one
month,
Thro' weary and yet ever wearier
hours,
The childless mother went to seek her
child ;
And when he felt the silence of his
house ⁸³⁰
About him, and the change and not
the change,
And those fixt eyes of painted ances-
tors
Staring for ever from their gilded
walls
On him their last descendant, his own
head
Began to droop, to fall. The man
became
Imbecile ; his one word was 'deso-
late.'
Dead for two years before his death
was he ;
But when the second Christmas came,
escaped
His keepers, and the silence which he
felt,
To find a deeper in the narrow gloom
By wife and child ; nor wanted at his
end ⁸⁴¹
The dark retinue reverencing death
At golden thresholds ; nor from tender
hearts,
And those who sorrow'd o'er a van-
ish'd race,
Pity, the violet on the tyrant's grave.
Then the great Hall was wholly
broken down,
And the broad woodland parcell'd
into farms ;
And where the two contrived their
daughter's good,
Lies the hawk's cast, the mole has
made his run,
The hedgehog underneath the plan-
tain bores, ⁸⁵⁰

The rabbit fondles his own harmless
face,
The slow-worm creeps, and the thin
weasel there
Follows the mouse, and all is open
field.

SEA DREAMS

A city clerk, but gently born and
bred ;
His wife, an unknown artist's orphan
child —
One babe was theirs, a Margaret,
three years old
They, thinking that her clear german-
der eye
Droopt in the giant-factored city-
gloom,
Came, with a month's leave given
them, to the sea ;
For which his gains were dock'd,
however small.
Small were his gains, and hard his
work ; besides,
Their slender household fortunes —
for the man
Had risk'd his little—like the little
thrift, ¹⁰
Trembled in perilous places o'er a
deep.
And oft, when sitting all alone, his
face
Would darken, as he cursed his cred-
ulousness,
And that one unctuous mouth which
lured him, rogue.
To buy strange shares in some Peru-
vian mine.
Now seaward-bound for health they
gain'd a coast,
All sand and cliff and deep-inrunning
cave,
At close of day ; slept, woke, and
went the next,
The Sabbath, pious variers from the
church,
To chapel ; where a heated pulpiteer,
Not preaching simple Christ to simple
men, ²¹
Announced the coming doom, and
fulminated
Against the Scarlet Woman and her
creed.
For sideways up he swung his arms,
and shriek'd

'Thus, thus with violence,' even as
 if he held
 The Apocalyptic millstone, and him-
 self
 Were that great angel; 'Thus with
 violence
 Shall Babylon be cast into the sea;
 Then comes the close.' The gentle-
 hearted wife
 Sat shuddering at the ruin of a world,
 He at his own; but when the wordy
 storm³¹
 Had ended, forth they came and paced
 the shore,
 Ran in and out the long sea-framing
 caves,
 Drank the large air, and saw, but
 scarce believed—
 The soot-flake of so many a summer
 still
 Clung to their fancies — that they saw,
 the sea.
 So now on sand they walk'd, and now
 on cliff,
 Lingering about the thymy promon-
 tories,
 Till all the sails were darken'd in the
 west,
 And rosed in the east, then homeward
 and to bed;⁴⁰
 Where she, who kept a tender Chris-
 tian hope,
 Haunting a holy text, and still to
 that
 Returning, as the bird returns, at
 night,
 'Let not the sun go down upon your
 wrath,'
 Said, 'Love, forgive him.' But he did
 not speak;
 And silenced by that silence lay the
 wife,
 Remembering her dear Lord who died
 for all,
 And musing on the little lives of men,
 And how they mar this little by their
 feuds.

But while the two were sleeping, a
 full tide⁵⁰
 Rose with ground-swell, which, on the
 foremost rocks
 Touching, upjetted in spirits of wild
 sea-smoke,
 And scaled in sheets of wasteful foam,
 and fell

In vast sea-cataracts—ever and anon
 Dead claps of thunder from within
 the cliffs
 Heard thro' the living roar. At this
 the babe,
 Their Margaret cradled near them,
 wail'd and woke
 The mother, and the father suddenly
 cried,
 'A wreck, a wreck!' then turn'd and
 groaning said:

'Forgive! How many will say,
 "forgive," and find⁶⁰
 A sort of absolution in the sound
 To hate a little longer! No; the sin
 That neither God nor man can well
 forgive,
 Hypocrisy, I saw it in him at once.
 Is it so true that second thoughts are
 best?
 Not first, and third, which are a riper
 first?
 Too ripe, too late! they come too late
 for use.
 Ah, love, there surely lives in man
 and beast
 Something divine to warn them of
 their foci;
 And such a sense, when first I fronted
 him,⁷⁰
 Said, "Trust him not;" but after,
 when I came
 To know him more, I lost it, knew him
 less,
 Fought with what seem'd my own un-
 charity,
 Sat at his table, drank his costly
 wines,
 Made more and more allowance for his
 talk;
 Went further, fool! and trusted him
 with all,
 All my poor scrapings from a dozen
 years
 Of dust and desk-work. There is no
 such mine,
 None; but a gulf of ruin, swallowing
 gold,
 Not making. Ruin'd! ruin'd! the sea
 roars⁸⁰
 Ruin—a fearful night!'

'Not fearful; fair,'
 Said the good wife, 'if every star in
 heaven



"I dream'd
Of such a tide swelling toward the land"

Can make it fair; you do but hear the
tide.
Had you ill dreams?

 'O, yes,' he said, 'I dream'd
Of such a tide swelling toward the
land,
And I from out the boundless outer
deep
Swept with it to the shore, and enter'd
one
Of those dark caves that run beneath
the cliffs.
I thought the motion of the boundless
deep
Bore thro' the cave, and I was heaved
upon it
In darkness; then I saw one lovely star⁹⁰
Larger and larger. "What a world,"
I thought,
"To live in!" but in moving on I
found

Only the landward exit of the cave,
Bright with the sun upon the stream
beyond;
And near the light a giant woman sat,
All over earthy, like a piece of earth,
A pickaxe in her hand. Then out I
slipt
Into a land all sun and blossom, trees
As high as heaven, and every bird that
sings;
And here the night-light flickering in¹⁰⁰
my eyes
Awoke me.

 'That was then your dream,' she
said,
'Not sad, but sweet.'

 'So sweet, I lay,' said he,
'And mused upon it, drifting up the
stream
In fancy, till I slept again, and pieced

The broken vision ; for I dream'd that
 still
 The motion of the great deep bore me
 on,
 And that the woman walk'd upon the
 brink.
 I wonder'd at her strength, and ask'd
 her of it.
 "It came," she said, "by working in
 the mines."¹¹⁰
 O, then to ask her of my shares, I
 thought ;
 And ask'd ; but not a word ; she shook
 her head.
 And then the motion of the current
 ceased,
 And there was rolling thunder ; and
 we reach'd
 A mountain, like a wall of burs and
 thorns ;
 But she with her strong feet up the
 steep hill
 Trod out a path. I follow'd, and at
 top
 She pointed seaward ; there a fleet of
 glass,
 That seem'd a fleet of jewels under
 me,
 Sailing along before a gloomy cloud
 That not one moment ceased to thun-
 der, past¹²¹
 In sunshine. Right across its track
 there lay,
 Down in the water, a long reef of gold,
 Or what seem'd gold ; and I was glad
 at first
 To think that in our often-ransack'd
 world
 Still so much gold was left ; and then
 I fear'd
 Lest the gay navy there should splin-
 ter on it,
 And fearing waved my arm to warn
 them off ;
 An idle signal, for the brittle fleet—
 I thought I could have died to save
 it—near'd,¹³⁰
 Touch'd, clink'd, and clash'd, and
 vanish'd, and I woke,
 I heard the clash so clearly. Now I
 see
 My dream was Life, the woman honest
 Work,
 And my poor venture but a fleet of
 glass
 Wreck'd on a reef of visionary gold.'

'Nay,' said the kindly wife to com-
 fort him,
 'You raised your arm, you tumbled
 down and broke
 The glass with little Margaret's medi-
 cine in it ;
 And, breaking that, you made and
 broke your dream.
 A trifle makes a dream, a trifle breaks.'

 'No trifle,' groan'd the husband ;
 'yesterday¹⁴¹
 I met him suddenly in the street, and
 ask'd
 That which I ask'd the woman in my
 dream.
 Like her, he shook his head. "Show
 me the books !"
 He dodged me with a long and loose
 account.
 "The books, the books !" but he, he
 could not wait,
 Bound on a matter he of life and
 death ;
 When the great Books—see Danici
 seven and ten—
 Were open'd, I should find he meant
 me well ;
 And then began to bloat himself, and
 ooze¹⁵⁰
 All over with the fat affectionate smile
 That makes the widow lean. "My
 dearest friend,
 Have faith, have faith ! We live by
 faith," said he ;
 "And all things work together for the
 good
 Of those"—it makes me sick to quote
 him—last
 Gript my hand hard, and with God-
 bless-you went.
 I stood like one that had received a
 blow.
 I found a hard friend in his loose
 accounts,
 A loose one in the hard grip of his
 hand,
 A curse in his God-bless-you ; then
 my eyes¹⁶⁰
 Pursued him down the street, and far
 away,
 Among the honest shoulders of the
 crowd,
 Read rascal in the motions of his back,
 And scoundrel in the supple-sliding
 knee.'

'Was he so bound, poor soul?' said
the good wife;
'So are we all; but do not call him,
love,
Before you prove him, rogue, and
proved, forgive.
His gain is loss; for he that wrongs
his friend
Wrongs himself more, and ever bears
about

A silent court of justice in his breast,
Himself the judge and jury, and him-
self

The prisoner at the bar, ever con-
demn'd.

And that drags down his life; then
comes what comes

Hereafter; and he meant, he said he
meant,

Perhaps he meant, or partly meant,
you well.'

"With all his conscience and one
eye askew"—

Love, let me quote these lines, that
you may learn

A man is likewise counsel for himself,
Too often, in that silent court of
yours—

"With all his conscience and one eye
askew,

So false, he partly took himself for
true;

Whose pious talk, when most his
heart was dry,

Made wet the crafty crowsfoot round
his eye;

• Who, never naming God except for
gain,

So never took that useful name in vain,
Made Him his catspaw and the Cross
his tool,

And Christ the bait to trap his dupe
and fool;

Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace
he forged,

And snake-like slimed his victim ere
he gorged;

And oft at Bible meetings, o'er the
rest

Arising, did his holy oily best,
Dropping the too rough H in Hell
and Heaven,

To spread the Word by which himself
had thriven."

How like you this old satire?

'Nay,' she said,
'I loathe it; he had never kindly
heart,

Nor ever cared to better his own kind,
Who first wrote satire, with no pity
in it.

But will you hear *my* dream, for I
had one

That altogether went to music? Still
It awed me.'

Then she told it, having dream'd
Of that same coast. —

But round the North, a light,
A belt, it seem'd, of luminous vapor,
lay,

And ever in it a low musical note
Swell'd up and died; and, as it swell'd,
a ridge

Of breaker issued from the belt, and
still

Grew with the growing note, and
when the note

Had reach'd a thunderous fulness, on
those cliffs

Broke, mixt with awful light—the
same as that

Living within the belt—whereby she
saw

That all those lines of cliffs were cliffs
no more,

But huge cathedral fronts of every
age,

Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye could
see,

One after one; and then the great
ridge drew,

Lessening to the lessening music, back,
And past into the belt and swell'd
again

Slowly to music. Ever when it broke
The statues, king, or saint, or founder
fell;

Then from the gaps and chasms of
ruin left

Came men and women in dark clus-
ters round,

Some crying, 'Set them up! they
shall not fall!'

And others, 'Let them lie, for they
have fallen.'

And still they strove and wrangled;
and she grieved

In her strange dream, she knew not
why, to find

Their wildest wailings never out of tune
 With that sweet note; and ever as their shrieks
 Ran highest up the gamut, that great wave
 Returning, while none mark'd it, on the crowd
 Broke, mixt with awful light, and show'd their eyes
 Glaring, and passionate looks, and swept away
 The men of flesh and blood, and men of stone,²³⁰
 To the waste deeps together.

'Then I fixt
 My wistful eyes on two fair images,
 Both crown'd with stars and high among the stars, —
 The Virgin Mother standing with her child
 High up on one of those dark minster-fronts —
 Till she began to totter, and the child
 Clung to the mother, and sent out a cry
 Which mixt with little Margaret's, and I woke,
 And my dream awed me; — well — but what are dreams?
 Yours came but from the breaking of a glass,²⁴⁰
 And mine but from the crying of a child.'

'Child? No!' said he, 'but this tide's roar, and his,
 Our Boanerges with his threats of doom
 And loud-lung'd Antibabylonianisms —
 Altho' I grant but little music there —
 Went both to make your dream; but if there were
 A music harmonizing our wild cries,
 Sphere-music such as that you dream'd about,
 Why, that would make our passions far too like
 The discords dear to the musician.
 No —²⁵⁰
 One shriek of hate would jar all the hymns of heaven.
 True devils with no ear, they howl in tune
 With nothing but the devil!'

'"True" indeed!
 One of our town, but later by an hour
 Here than ourselves, spoke with me on the shore;
 While you were running down the sands, and made
 The dimpled flounce of the sea-furbe-low flap,
 Good man, to please the child. She brought strange news.
 Why were you silent when I spoke to-night?
 I had set my heart on your forgiving him²⁶⁰
 Before you knew. We *must* forgive the dead.'

'Dead! who is dead?'

'The man your eye pursued.
 A little after you had parted with him,
 He suddenly dropt dead of heart-d.s case.'

'Dead? he? of heart-disease? what heart had he
 To die of? dead!'

'Ah, dearest, if there be
 A devil in man, there is an angel too,
 And if he did that wrong you charge him with,
 His angel broke his heart. But your rough voice —
 You spoke so loud — has roused the child again.²⁷⁰
 Sleep, little birdie, sleep! will she not sleep
 Without her "little birdie"? well, then, sleep,
 And I will sing you "birdie."'

Saying this,
 The woman half turn'd round from him she loved,
 Left him one hand, and reaching thro' the night
 Her other, found — for it was close beside —
 And half-embraced the basket cradle head
 With one soft arm, which, like the pliant bough
 That moving moves the nest and nestling, sway'd

The cradle, while she sang this baby-song: 280

What does little birdie say
In her nest at peep of day?
Let me fly, says little birdie,
Mother, let me fly away.
Birdie, rest a little longer,
Till the little wings are stronger,
So she rests a little longer,
Then she flies away.

What does little baby say,
In her bed at peep of day? 290
Baby says, like little birdie,
Let me rise and fly away.
Baby, sleep a little longer,
Till the little limbs are stronger;
If she sleeps a little longer,
Baby too shall fly away.

'She sleeps; let us too, let all evil,
sleep.

He also sleeps — another sleep than
ours.

We can do no more wrong; forgive
him, dear,
And I shall sleep the sounder!'

Then the man,
'His deeds yet live, the worst is yet
to come. 301
Yet let your sleep for this one night
be sound;
I do forgive him!'

'Thanks, my love,' she said,
'Your own will be the sweeter' and
they slept.

ODE SUNG AT THE OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

I

UPLIFT a thousand voices full and
sweet,
In this wide hall with earth's inven-
tion stored,
And praise the invisible universal
Lord,
Who lets once more in peace the
nations meet,
Where Science, Art, and Labor have
outpour'd
Their myriad horns of plenty at our
feet.

II

O silent father of our Kings to be,
Mourn'd in this golden hour of jubi-
lee,
For this, for all, we weep our thanks
to thee!

III

The world-compelling plan was
thine, —
And, lo! the long laborious miles
Of Palace; lo! the giant aisles,
Rich in model and design.
Harvest-tool and husbandry,
Loom and wheel and enginery,
Secrets of the sullen mine,
Steel and gold, and corn and wine,
Fabric rough, or fairy-fine,
Sunny tokens of the Line,
Polar marvels, and a feast
Of wonder, out of West and East,
And shapes and hues of Art divine!
All of beauty, all of use,
That one fair planet can produce,
Brought from under every star,
Blown from over every main,
And mixt, as life is mixt with pain,
The works of peace with works of
war.

IV

Is the goal so far away?
Far, how far no tongue can say,
Let us dream our dream to-day.

V

O ye, the wise who think, the wise
who reign,
From growing Commerce loose her
latest chain,
And let the fair white-wing'd peace
maker fly
To happy havens under all the sky,
And mix the seasons and the golden
hours;
Till each man find his own in all
men's good,
And all men work in noble brother-
hood,
Breaking their mailed fleets and armed
towers,
And ruling by obeying Nature's
powers,
And gathering all the fruits of earth
and crown'd with all her flowers.

A WELCOME TO ALEXANDRA

MARCH 7, 1863

SEA-KINGS' daughter from over the
sea,

Alexandra!

Saxon and Norman and Dane are we,
But all of us Danes in our welcome of
thee,

Alexandra!

Welcome her, thunders of fort and of
fleet!

Welcome her, thundering cheer of the
street!

Welcome her, all things youthful and
sweet,

Scatter the blossom under her feet!

Break, happy land, into earlier flowers!

Make music, O bird, in the new-budded
bowers!

Blazon your mottoes of blessing and
prayer!

Welcome her, welcome her, all that is
ours!

Warble, O bugle, and trumpet, blare!
Flags, flutter out upon turrets and
towers!

Flames, on the windy headland flare!

Utter your jubilee, steeple and spire!

Clash, ye bells, in the merry March air!

Flash, ye cities, in rivers of fire!

Rush to the roof, sudden rocket, and
higher

Melt into stars for the land's desire!

Roll and rejoice, jubilant voice,

Roll as a ground-swell dash'd on the
strand,

Roar as the sea when he welcomes the
land,

And welcome her, welcome the land's
desire,

The sea-kings' daughter as happy as
fair,

Blissful bride of a blissful heir,

Bride of the heir of the kings of the
sea—

O joy to the people and joy to the
throne,

Come to us, love us and make us your
own;

For Saxon or Dane or Norman we,
Teuton or Celt, or whatever we be,

We are each all Dane in our welcome
of thee,

Alexandra!

THE GRANDMOTHER

I

AND Willy, my eldest-born, is gone,
you say, little Anne?

Ruddy and white, and strong on his
legs, he looks like a man.

And Willy's wife has written; she
never was over-wise,

Never the wife for Willy; he would n't
take my advice.

II

For, Annie, you see, her father was
not the man to save,

Had n't a head to manage, and drank
himself into his grave.

Pretty enough, very pretty! but I was
against it for one.

Eh! — but he would n't hear me — and
Willy, you say, is gone.

III

Willy, my beauty, my eldest-born, the
flower of the flock;

Never a man could fling him, for
Willy stood like a rock.

'Here's a leg for a babe of a week!'
says Doctor; and he would be
bound

There was not his like that year in
twenty parishes round.

IV

Strong of his hands, and strong on his
legs, but still of his tongue!

I ought to have gone before him; I
wonder he went so young.

I cannot cry for him, Annie; I have
not long to stay.

Perhaps I shall see him the sooner, for
he lived far away.

V

Why do you look at me, Annie? you
think I am hard and cold;

But all my children have gone before
me, I am so old.

I cannot weep for Willy, nor can I
weep for the rest;

Only at your age, Annie, I could have
wept with the best.

20

VI

For I remember a quarrel I had with
your father, my dear,



' Seventy years ago, my darling, seventy years ago '

All for a slanderous story, that cost
me many a tear.
I mean your grandfather, Annie ; it
cost me a world of woe,
seventy years ago, my darling, seventy
years ago.

VII

For Jenny, my cousin, had come to
the place, and I knew right well
That Jenny had tript in her time ; I
knew, but I would not tell.
And she to be coming and slandering
me, the base little liar !
But the tongue is a fire, as you know,
my dear, the tongue is a fire.

VIII

And the parson made it his text that
week, and he said likewise
That a lie which is half a truth is
ever the blackest of lies, ³⁰
That a lie which is all a lie may be
met and fought with outright,
But a lie which is part a truth is a
harder matter to fight.

IX

And Willy had not been down to the
farm for a week and a day ;
And all things look'd half-dead, tho'
it was the middle of May.
Jenny, to slander me, who knew what
Jenny had been !
But soiling another, Annie, will never
make oneself clean .

X

And I cried myself well-nigh blind,
and all of an evening late
I climb'd to the top of the garth, and
stood by the road at the gate.
The moon like a rick on fire was
rising over the dale,
And whit, whit, whit, in the bush
beside me chirrup the night-
ingale. 40

XI

All of a sudden he stopt ; there past
by the gate of the farm
Willy, — he didn't see me, — and
Jenny hung on his arm.

Out into the road I started, and spoke
 I scarce knew how ;
 Ah, there's no fool like the old one —
 it makes me angry now.

XII

Willy stood up like a man, and look'd
 the thing that he meant ;
 Jenny, the viper, made me a mocking
 curtsy and went.
 And I said, 'Let us part; in a hun-
 dred years it'll all be the same.
 You cannot love me at all, if you love
 not my good name.'

XIII

And he turn'd, and I saw his eyes all
 wet, in the sweet moonshine :
 'Sweetheart, I love you so well that
 your good name is mine. 50
 And what do I care for Jane, let her
 speak of you well or ill ;
 But marry me out of hand ; we two
 shall be happy still.'

XIV

'Marry you, Willy !' said I, 'but I
 needs must speak my mind,
 And I fear you'll listen to tales, be
 jealous and hard and unkind.'
 But he turn'd and claspt me in his
 arms, and answer'd, 'No, love,
 no ;'
 Seventy years ago, my darling, sev-
 enty years ago.

XV

So Willy and I were wedded. I wore
 a lilac gown ;
 And the ringers rang with a will, and
 he gave the ringers a crown.
 But the first that ever I bare was dead
 before he was born ;
 Shadow and shine is life, little Annie,
 flower and thorn. 60

XVI

That was the first time, too, that ever
 I thought of death.
 There lay the sweet little body that
 never had drawn a breath.
 I had not wept, little Anne, not since
 I had been a wife ;
 But I wept like a child that day, for
 the babe had fought for his life.

XVII

His dear little face was troubled, as
 if with anger or pain ;
 I look'd at the still little body — his
 trouble had all been in vain.
 For Willy I cannot weep, I shall see
 him another morn ;
 But I wept like a child for the child
 that was dead before he was
 born.

XVIII

But he cheer'd me, my good man, for
 he seldom said me nay.
 Kind, like a man, was he ; like a man,
 too, would have his way ; 70
 Never jealous — not he. We had
 many a happy year ;
 And he died, and I could not weep —
 my own time seem'd so near.

XIX

But I wish'd it had been God's will
 that I, too, then could have
 died ;
 I began to be tired a little, and fain
 had slept at his side.
 And that was ten years back ; or more,
 if I don't forget ;
 But as to the children, Annie, they're
 all about me yet.

XX

Pattering over the boards, my Annie
 who left me at two,
 Patter she goes, my own little Annie,
 an Annie like you ;
 Pattering over the boards, she comes
 and goes at her will,
 While Harry is in the five-acre and
 Charlie ploughing the hill. 80

XXI

And Harry and Charlie, I hear them
 too — they sing to their team ;
 Often they come to the door in a
 pleasant kind of a dream.
 They come and sit by my chair, they
 hover about my bed —
 I am not always certain if they be
 alive or dead.

XXII

And yet I know for a truth there's
 none of them left alive,

For Harry went at sixty, your father
at sixty-five;
And Willy, my eldest-born, at nigh
threescore and ten.
I knew them all as babies, and now
they're elderley men.

XXIII

For mine is a time of peace, it is not
often I grieve;
I am oftener sitting at home in my
father's farm at eve; ⁹⁰
And the neighbors come and laugh
and gossip, and so do I;
I find myself often laughing at things
that have long gone by.

XXIV

To be sure the preacher says, our
sins should make us sad;
But mine is a time of peace, and there
is Grace to be had;
And God, not man, is the Judge of us
all when life shall cease;
And in this Book, little Annie, the
message is one of peace.

XXV

And age is a time of peace, so it be
free from pain,
And happy has been my life; but I
would not live it again.
I seem to be tired a little, that's all,
and long for rest;
Only at your age, Annie, I could have
wept with the best. ¹⁰⁰

XXVI

So Willy has gone, my beauty, my
eldest-born, my flower;
But how can I weep for Willy, he has
but gone for an hour, —
Gone for a minute, my son, from this
room into the next;
I, too, shall go in a minute. What
time have I to be vexed?

XXVII

And Willy's wife has written, she
never was over-wise.
Get me my glasses, Annie; thank
God that I keep my eyes.
There is but a trifle left you, when I
shall have passed away.
But stay with the old woman now;
you cannot have long to stay.

NORTHERN FARMER

OLD STYLE

I

WHEER 'asta bein saw long and meä
liggin' 'ere aloän?
Noorse? thoort nowt o' a noorse;
whoy, Doctor's abeäin an' agoän,
Says that I moänt 'a naw moor ääle,
but I beänt a fool;
Git ma my ääle, fur I beänt a gawin'
to breäk my rule.

II

Doctors, they knows nowt, fur a says
what's nawways true;
Naw soort o' koind o' use to sääy the
things that a do.
I've 'ed my point o' ääle ivry noight
sin' I beäin 'erc.
An' I've 'ed my quart ivry market-
noight for foorty year.

III

Parson s a beäin loikewise, an' a sit-
tin' 'ere o' my bed.
'The Amoighty's a taäkin o' you¹ to
'issän, my friend, 'a säid,
An' a towä ma my sins, an' 's toithe
were due, an' I gied it in
hond;
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done
boy the lond.

IV

Larn'd a ma' beä. I reckons I 'annot
sä mooch to larn.
But a cast oop, thot a did, 'bout Bessy
Marris's barne.
Thaw a knaws I hallus voäted wi'
Squoire an' choorch an' stäite,
An' i' the woost o' toimes I wur niver
agin the räite.

V

An' I hallus coom'd to 's choorch afoor
moy Sally wur deä,
An' 'eärd 'um a bummin' awääy loike
a buzzard-clock² ower my 'eä,
An' I niver knaw'd whot a meän'd
but I thowt a 'ad summut to
sääy,
An' I thowt a säid whot a owt to 'a
säid, an' I coom'd awääy.

¹ ou as in hour.² Cockchafer.

VI

Bessy Marris's barne! tha knaws she
laäid it to meä.
Mowt a beän, mayhap, for she wur a
bad un, sheä.
'Siver, I kep 'um, I kep 'um, my lass,
tha mun understand ;
I done moy duty boy 'um, as I 'a done
boy the lond.

VII

But Parson a cooms an' a goäls, an' a
says it cäsy an' freeä :
'The Amoighty 's a taäkin o' you to
'issén, my friend,' says 'eä.
I weänt säly men be loärs, thaw sum-
mun said it in 'aäste ;
But 'e reäds wonn sarmin a weeäk, an'
I 'a stubb'd Thurnaby waäste.

VIII

D' ya moind the waäste, my lass ?
naw, naw, tha was not born
then ;
Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'cärd
'um mysén ;
Moäst loike a butter-bump,¹ fur I 'cärd
'um about an' about,
But I stubb'd 'um oop wi' the lot, an'
raäved an' rembled 'um out.

IX

Keäper's it wur ; fo' they fun 'um theer
a-laäid of 'is faäce
Down i' the woild 'enemies² afoor I
coom'd to the plaäce.
Noäks or Thimbleby — toäner³ 'ed
shot 'um as deäid as a naäil.
Noäks wur 'ang'd for it oop at 'soize —
but git ma my aäle.

X

Dubbut loök at the waäste ; theer
warn't not feeäd for a cow ;
Nowt at all but bracken an' fuzz, an'
looök at it now —
Warn't worth nowt a haäcre, an' now
theer's lots o' feeäd,
Fourscoor⁴ yows upon it, an' some on
it down i' seeäid.⁵

XI

Nobbut a bit on it's left, an' I meän'd
to 'a stubb'd it at fall,

¹ Bittern. ² Anemones. ³ One or other.

⁴ ou as in *hour*.

⁵ Clover.

Done it ta-year I meän'd, an' runn'd
plow thruff it an' all,
If Godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut
let ma aloän, —
Meä, wi' haäte hoonderd haäcre o'
Squire's, an' lond o' my oän.

XII

Do Godamoighty knaw what a 's do-
ing a-taäkin' o' meä ?
I beänt wonn as saws 'ere a beän an'
yonder a peä ;
An' Squire 'ull be sa mad an' all —
a' dear, a' gear !
And I 'a managed for Squire coom
Michaelmas thuty year.

XIII

A mowt 'a taäen owl Joänes, as 'ant
not a 'aäpoth o' sense,
Or a mowt 'a taäen young Robins — a
niver mended a fence ;
But Godamoighty a moost taäke meä
an' taäke ma now,
Wi' aäf the cows to cauve an' Thurn-
aby hoäms to plow !

XIV

Looök 'ow quoloty smoiles when they
seeäts ma a passin' boy,
Says to thessén, naw doubt, 'What a
man a beä sewer-loy !'
Fur they knaws what I beän to Squire
sin' fust a coom'd to the 'All ;
I done moy duty by Squire an' I done
moy duty boy hall.

XV

Squire's i' Lunnon, an' surmun I
reckons 'ull 'a to wroite,
For whoä's to howd the lond ater meä
thot muddles ma quoit ;
Sartin-sewer I beä thot a weänt niver
give it to Joänes,
Naw, nor a moänt to Robins — a niver
rembles the stoäns.

XVI

But summun 'ull come ater meä may-
hap wi' 'is kittle o' steäm
Huzzin' an' maäzin' the blessed feälds
wi' the devil's oän teäm.
Sin' I mun doy I mun doy, thaw loife
they says is sweet,
But sin' I mun doy I mun doy, for I
couldn abear to see it.

XVII

What atta stanniu' theer fur, an' doesn
bring ma the aille ?
Doctor's a 'toittler, lass, an a 's hallus
i' the owd taile ;
I weänt breäik rules fur Doctor, a
knaaws naw moor nor a floy ;
Git ma my aille, I tell tha, an' if I mun
doy I mun doy.

NORTHERN FARMER

NEW STYLE

I

DOSN'T thou 'ear my 'erse's legs, as
they canters awaäy ?
Proputty, proputty, proputty — that 's
what I 'ears 'em säy.
Proputty, proputty, proputty — Sam,
thou's an ass for thy pains ;
Theer's moor sense i' one o' 'is legs,
nor in all thy brains.

II

WOÄ — theer's a craw to pluck wi' tha,
Sam : yon's parson's 'ouse —
Doesn't thou know that a man mun be
eäther a man or a mouse ?
Time to think on it then ; for thou'll
be twenty to weäik.¹
Proputty, proputty — woä then, woä
— let ma 'ear mysén speäik.

III

Me an' thy muther, Sammy, 'as beäin
a-talkin' o' thee ;
Thou 's beäin talkin' to muther, an' she
beäin a-tellin' it me.
Thou'll not marry for munny — thou's
sweet upo' parson's lass —
Noä — thou'll marry for luvv — an' we
boäth on us thinks tha an ass.

IV

Seeä'd her to-daäy goä by — Sääint's-
daäy — they was ringin' the
bells.
She's a beauty, thou thinks — an' soä
is scoors o' gells,
Them as 'as munny an' all — wot's a
beauty ? — the flower as blaws.
But proputty, proputty sticks, an' pro-
putty, proputty gawks.

¹ This week.

V

Do'ant be stunt ;¹ taäke time. I
knaaws what maäikes tha sa mad.
Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén
when I wur a lad ?
But I know'd a Quaäker feller as
often 'as tow'd ma this :
'Doänt thou marry for munny, but
goä wheer munny is !'

VI

An' I went wheer munny war ; an
thy muther coom to 'and,
Wi' lots o' munny laäid by, an' a nice-
tish bit o' land.
Maäybe she warn't a beauty — I niver
giv it a thowt —
But warn't she as good to cuddle an'
kiss as a lass as 'ant nowt ?

VII

Parson's lass 'ant nowt, an' she weänt
'a nowt when 'e's dead
Mun be a guvness, lad, or summut,
and addle² her breäid.
Why ? fur 'e's nobbut a curate, an'
weänt niver get hissen clear.
An' 'e maäde the bed as 'e ligs on afoor
'e coom'd to the shere.

VIII

An' thin 'e coom'd to the parish wi'
lots o' Varsity debt,
Stook to his taäl they did, an' 'e 'ant
got shut on 'em yet.
An' 'e ligs on 'is back i' the grip, wi'
noän to lend 'im a shove,
Woorse nor a far-welter'd³ yowe ; fur,
Sammy, 'e married fur luvv.

IX

Luvv ? what's luvv ? thou can luvv
thy lass an' 'er munny too,
Maäkin' 'em goä together, as they've
good right to do.
Couldn I luvv thy muther by cause o'
'er munny laäid by ?
Näy — fur I luvv'd 'er a vast sight
moor fur it ; reäson why.

X

Ay, an' thy muther says thou wants to
marry the lass,

¹ Obstinate.² Earn.³ Or, fow-welter'd, — said of a sheep lying
on its back in the furrow.

Cooms of a gentleman burn; an' we
boäth on us thinks tha an
ass.

Woä then, proputtty, wiltha?—an ass
as near as mays nowt¹—

Woä then, wiltha? dangtha!— the
bees is as fell as owt.²

XI

Break me a bit o' the esh for his 'cüd,
lad, out o' the fence!

Gentleman burn! what's gentleman
burn? is it shillins an' pence?

Proputtty, proputtty's ivrything 'ere,
an', Sammy, I'm blest

If it is n't the sailme oop yonder, fur
them as 'as it's the best.

XII

Tis'n them as 'as munny as breakes
into 'ouses an' steills,

Them as 'as coäts to their backs an'
taäkes their regular meills.

Noä, but it's them as niver knows
wheer a meill's to be 'ad.

Taäke my word for it, Sammy, the
poor in a loomp is bad.

XIII

Them or thir feythers, tha sees, mun
'a beäin a laüzy lot,

Fur work mun 'a gone to the gittin'
whiniver munny was got.

Feyther 'ad ammost nowt; leästways
'is munny was 'id

But 'e tued an' moil'd issén deäid, an'
'e died a good un, 'e did.

XIV

Looök thou theer wheer Wigglesby
beck cooms out by the 'ill!

Feyther run oop to the farm, an' I
runs oop to the mill;

An' I'll run oop to the brig, an' that
thou'll live to see;

And if thou marries a good un I'll
leäve the land to thee.

XV

Thim's my noätions, Sammy, wheerby
I meäns to stick;

But if thou marries a bad un, I'll
leäve the land to Dick. —

¹ Makes nothing.

² The flies are as fierce as anything.

Coom oop, proputtty, proputtty—that's
what I 'ears 'im saäy —

Proputtty, proputtty, proputtty—canter
an' canter awaäy.

IN THE VALLEY OF CAUTE-
RETZ

ALL along the valley, stream that
flashest white.

Deepening thy voice with the deepen-
ing of the night,

All along the valley, where thy waters
flow,

I walk'd with one I loved two and
thirty years ago.

All along the valley, while I walk'd
to-day,

The two and thirty years were a mist
that rolls away;

For all along the valley, down thy
rocky bed,

Thy living voice to me was as the
voice of the dead,

And all along the valley, by rock and
cave and tree,

The voice of the dead was a living
voice to me.

THE FLOWER

ONCE in a golden hour

I cast to earth a seed.

Up there came a flower,

The people said, a weed.

To and fro they went

Thro' my garden-bower,

And muttering discontent

Cursed me and my flower.

Then it grew so tall

It wore a crown of light,

But thieves from o'er the wall

Stole the seed by night;

Sow'd it far and wide

By every town and tower,

Till all the people cried,

'Splendid is the flower.'

Read my little fable:

He that runs may read.

Most can raise the flowers now

For all have got the seed.

And some are pretty enough,
And some are poor indeed ;
And now again the people
Call it but a weed.

REQUIESCAT

FAIR is her cottage in its place,
Where yon broad water sweetly,
slowly glides.
It sees itself from thatch to base
Dream in the sliding tides.

And fairer she, but ah, how soon to
die !

Her quiet dream of life this hour
may cease.

Her peaceful being slowly passes by
To some more perfect peace.

THE SAILOR BOY

HE rose at dawn and, fired with hope,
Shot o'er the seething harbor-bar,
And reach'd the ship and caught the
rope,
And whistled to the morning star

And while he whistled long and loud
He heard a fierce mermaiden cry,
'O boy, tho' thou art young and
proud,
I see the place where thou wilt lie.

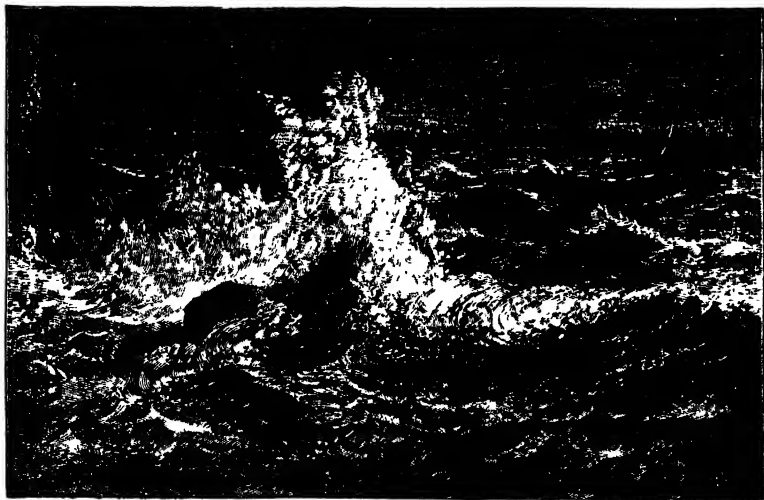
'The sands and yeasty surges mix
In caves about the dreary bay,
And on thy ribs the limpet sticks,
And in thy heart the scrawl shall
play.'

'Fool,' he answer'd, 'death is sure
To those that stay and those that
roam,
But I will nevermore endure
To sit with empty hands at home.

'My mother clings about my neck,
My sisters crying, "Stay for
shame ;"

My father raves of death and wreck, —
They are all to blame, they are all
to blame.

'God help me ! save I take my part
Of danger on the roaring sea,
A devil rises in my heart,
Far worse than any death to me.'



'God help me ! save I take my part
Of danger on the roaring sea''

THE ISLET

'WHITHER, O whither, love, shall we
go,
For a score of sweet little summers or
so?'

The sweet little wife of the singer
said,

On the day that follow'd the day she
was wed,

'Whither, O whither, love, shall we
go?'

And the singer shaking his curly
head

Turn'd as he sat, and struck the keys
There at his right with a sudden
crash,

Singing, 'And shall it be over the
seas

With a crew that is neither rude nor
rash,

But a bevy of Eroses apple-cheek'd,
In a shallop of crystal ivory-beak'd?

With a satin sail of a ruby glow,
To a sweet little Eden on earth that I
know,

A mountain islet pointed and peak'd;
Waves on a diamond shingle dash,

Cataract brooks to the ocean run,
Fairly-delicate palaces shine

Mixt with myrtle and clad with vine,
And overstream'd and silvery-streak'd

With many a rivulet high against the
sun

The facets of the glorious mountain
flash

Above the valleys of palm and pine.'

'Thither, O thither, love, let us go.'

'No, no, no!

For in all that exquisite isle, my dear,
There is but one bird with a musical
throat,

And his compass is but of a single
note,

That it makes one weary to hear.'

'Mock me not! mock me not! love,
let us go.'

'No, love, no.

For the bud ever breaks into bloom
on the tree,

And a storm never wakes on the lonely
sea,

And a worm is there in the lonely
wood,

That pierces the liver and blackens
the blood,

And makes it a sorrow to be.'

A DEDICATION

DEAR, near and true, — no truer Time
himself

Can prove you, tho' he make you
evermore

Dearer and nearer, as the rapid of
life

Shoots to the fall, — take this and
pray that he

Who wrote it, honoring your sweet
faith in him,

May trust himself; and after praise
and scorn,

As one who feels the immeasurable
world,

Attain the wise indifference of the
wise;

And after autumn past — if left to
pass

His autumn into seeming-leafless
days —

Draw toward the long frost and long-
est night,

Wearing his wisdom lightly, like the
fruit

Which in our winter woodland looks
a flower.¹

EXPERIMENTS

BOÁDICÉA

WHILE about the shore of Mona those
Neronian legionaries

Burnt and broke the grove and altar
of the Druid and Druidess,

Far in the East Boádicéa, standing
loftily charioted,

Mad and maddening all that heard
her in her fierce volubility,

Girt by half the tribes of Britain, near
the colony Cámulodúne,

Yell'd and shriek'd between her
daughters o'er a wild confed-
eracy.

¹ The fruit of the Spindle-tree (*Euonymus Europæus*).

'They that scorn the tribes and call
us Britain's barbarous popu-
laces,

Did they hear me, would they listen,
did they pity me supplicating?

Shall I heed them in their anguish?
shall I brook to be supplicated?

Hear, Icenian, Catieuchlanian, hear,
Coritanian, Trinobant! ¹⁰

Must their ever-ravelling eagle's beak
and talon annihilate us?

Tear the noble heart of Britain, leave
it gorily quivering?

Bark an answer, Britain's raven!
bark and blacken innumerable,

Blacken round the Roman carrion,
make the carcase a skeleton,

Kite and kestrel, wolf and wolfkin,
from the wilderness, wallow in
it,

Till the face of Bel be brighten'd,
Taranis be propitiated.

Lo their colony half-defended! lo
their colony, C  mulod  ne!

There the horde of Roman robbers
mock at a barbarous adversary.

There the hive of Roman liars wor-
ship an emperor-idiot.

Such is Rome, and this her deity;
hear it, Spirit of C  ssiv  la  n!

'Hear it, Gods! the Gods have
heard it, O Icenian, O Corita-
nian! ²¹

Doubt not ye the Gods have answer'd,
Catieuchlanian, Trinobant.

These have told us all their anger in
miraculous utterances,

Thunder, a flying fire in heaven, a
murmur heard   rially,

Phantom sound of blows descending,
moan of an enemy massacred,

Phantom wail of women and children,
multitudinous agonies.

Bloodily flow'd the Tamesa rolling
phantom bodies of horses and
men;

Then a phantom colony smoulder'd
on the reflux estuary;

Lastly yonder yester-even, suddenly
giddily tottering—

There was one who watch'd and told
me—down their statue of Vic-
tory fell. ³⁰

Lo their precious Roman bantling, lo
the colony C  mulod  ne,

Shall we teach it a Roman lesson?
shall we care to be pitiful?

Shall we deal with it as an infant?
shall we dandle it amorously?

'Hear, Icenian, Catieuchlanian,
hear, Coritanian, Trinobant!

While I roved about the forest, long
and bitterly meditating,

There I heard them in the darkness,
at the mystical ceremony;

Loosely robed in flying raiment, sang
the terrible prophetesses:

"Fear not, isle of blowing woodland,
isle of silvery parapets!

Tho' the Roman eagle shadow thee,
tho' the gathering enemy nar-
row thee,

Thou shalt wax and he shall dwindle,
thou shalt be the mighty one
yet! ⁴⁰

Thine the liberty, thine the glory, thine
the deeds to be celebrated,

Thine the myriad-rolling ocean, light
and shadow illimitable,

Thine the lands of lasting summer,
many-blossoming Paradises,

Thine the North and thine the South
and thine the battle-thunder of
God."

So they chanted: how shall Britain
light upon auguries happier?

So they chanted in the darkness, and
there cometh a victory now.

'Hear, Icenian, Catieuchlanian,
hear, Coritanian, Trinobant!

Me the wife of rich Pras  t  gus, me
the lover of liberty,

Me they seized and me they tortured,
me they lash'd and humiliated,

Me the sport of ribald Veterans, mine
of ruffian violators! ⁵⁰

See, they sit, they hide their faces,
miserable in ignominy!

Wherefore in me burns an anger, not
by blood to be satiated.

Lo the palaces and the temple, lo the
colony C  mulod  ne!

There they ruled, and thence they
wasted all the flourishing terri-
tory,

Thither at their will they haled the
yellow-ringleted Britoness—

Bloodily, bloodily fall the battle-axe
unexhausted, inexorable.

Shout, Icenian, Caticuchlanian, shout,
 Coritanian, Trinobant,
 Till the victim hear within and yearn
 to hurry precipitously,
 Like the leaf in a roaring whirlwind,
 like the smoke in a hurricane
 whirl'd.
 Lo the colony, there they rioted in the
 city of Cúnobeline! 60
 There they drank in cups of emerald,
 there at tables of ebony lay,
 Rolling on their purple couches in their
 tender effeminacy.
 There they dwell and there they rioted;
 there — there — they dwell no
 more.
 Burst the gates, and burn the palaces,
 break the works of the statuary,
 Take the hoary Roman head and shat-
 ter it, hold it abominable,
 Cut the Roman boy to pieces in his
 lust and voluptuousness,
 Lash the maiden into swooning, me
 they lash'd and humiliated,
 Chop the breasts from off the mother,
 dash the brains of the little one
 out,
 Up, my Britons! on, my chariot! on,
 my chargers, trample them
 under us!

So the Queen Boëdicéa, standing
 loftily charioted, 70
 Brandishing in her hand a dart and
 rolling glances lioness-like,
 Yell'd and shriek'd between her daugh-
 ters in her fierce volubility.
 Till her people all around the royal
 chariot agitated,
 Madly dash'd the darts together, writh-
 ing barbarous lineaments,
 Made the noise of frosty woodlands,
 when they shiver in January,
 Roar'd as when the roaring breakers
 boom and blanch on the preci-
 pices,
 Yell'd as when the winds of winter
 tear an oak on a promontory.
 So the silent colony, hearing her tumultu-
 ous adversaries
 Clash the darts and on the buckler beat
 with rapid unanimous hand,
 Thought on all her evil tyrannies, all
 her pitiless avarice, 80
 Till she felt the heart within her fall
 and flutter tremulously,

Then her pulses at the clamoring of
 her enemy fainted away.
 Out of evil evil flourishes, out of tyr-
 anny tyranny buds.
 Ran the land with Roman slaughter,
 multitudinous agonies.
 Perish'd many a maid and matron,
 many a valorous legionary,
 Fell the colony, city, and citadel, Lon-
 don, Verulam, Cúmulodúne.

IN QUANTITY

(HEXAMETERS AND PENTAMETERS)

ON TRANSLATIONS OF HOMER

THESE lame hexameters the strong-
 wing'd music of Homer!
 No — but a most burlesque barba-
 rous experiment.
 When was a harsher sound ever heard,
 ye Muses, in England?
 When did a frog coarser croak upon
 our Helicon?
 Hexameters no worse than daring Ger-
 many gave us,
 Barbarous experiment, barbarous
 hexameters.

(ALCAICS)

MILTON

O MIGHTY-MOUTH'D inventor of har-
 monies,
 O skill'd to sing of Time or Eternity,
 God-gifted organ-voice of England,
 Milton, a name to resound for
 ages;
 Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
 Starr'd from Jehovah's gorgeous armo-
 ries,
 Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean
 Rings to the roar of an angel onset!
 Me rather all that bowery loneliness,
 The brooks of Eden mazily murmur-
 ing,
 And bloom profuse and cedar arches
 Charm, as a wanderer out in ocean,
 Where some refulgent sunset of India
 Streams o'er a rich ambrosial ocean isle,
 And crimson-hued the stately palm-
 woods
 Whisper in odorous heights of
 even.

(HENDECASYLLABICS)

'O YOU CHORUS OF INDOLENT REVIEWERS'

O you chorus of indolent reviewers,
Irresponsible, indolent reviewers,
Look, I come to the test, a tiny poem
All composed in a metre of Catullus,
All in quantity, careful of my motion,
Like the skater on ice that hardly bears
him,
Lest I fall unawares before the people,
Waking laughter in indolent reviewers.
Should I flounder awhile without a tumble
Thro' this metrification of Catullus,
They should speak to me not without
a welcome,
All that chorus of indolent reviewers.
Hard, hard, hard is it, only not to
tumble,
So fantastical is the dainty metre.
Wherefore slight me not wholly, nor
believe me
Too presumptuous, indolent reviewers.
O blatant Magazines, regard me
rather —
Since I blush to belaud myself a moment —
As some rare little rose, a piece of in-
most
Horticultural art, or half coquette-like
Maiden, not to be greeted unbenignly.

SPECIMEN OF A TRANSLATION OF
THE ILIAD IN BLANK VERSE

[ILIAD, VIII. 542-561]

So Hector spake; the Trojans roar'd
applause;
Then loosed their sweating horses from
the yoke,
And each beside his chariot bound his
own;
And oxen from the city, and goodly
sheep
In haste they drove, and honey hearted
wine
And bread from out the houses
brought, and heap'd

Their firewood, and the winds from
off the plain
Roll'd the rich vapor far into the
heaven.
And these all night upon the bridge¹
of war
Sat glorying; many a fire before them
blazed.
As when in heaven the stars about the
moon
Look beautiful, when all the winds
are laid,
And every height comes out, and jut-
ting peak
And valley, and the immeasurable
heavens
Break open to their highest, and all
the stars
Shine, and the shepherd gladdens in
his heart;
So many a fire between the ships and
stream
Of Xanthus blazed before the towers
of Troy,
A thousand on the plain; and close by
each
Sat fifty in the blaze of burning fire;
And eating hoary grain and pulse the
steeds,
Fixt by their cars, waited the golden
dawn.

THE THIRD OF FEBRUARY, 1852

My Lords, we heard you speak: you
told us all
That England's honest censure went
too far,
That our free press should cease to
brawl,
Not sting the fiery Frenchman into
war.
It was our ancient privilege, my Lords
To fling whate'er we felt, not fearing,
into words.

We love not this French God, the child
of hell,
Wild War, who breaks the converse
of the wise;
But though we love kind Peace so
well,
We dare not even by silence sanction
lies.

¹ Or, ridge.

It might be safe our censures to withdraw,
And yet, my Lords, not well; there is
a higher law.

As long as we remain, we must speak
free,

Tho' all the storm of Europe on us
break.

No little German state are we,
But the one voice in Europe; we
must speak,

That if to-night our greatness were
struck dead,

There might be left some record of
the things we said.

If you be fearful, then must we be
bold.

Our Britain cannot salve a tyrant
o'er.

Better the waste Atlantic roll'd

On her and us and ours for evermore.

What! have we fought for Freedom
from our prime,

At last to dodge and palter with a
public crime?

Shall we fear *him*? our own we never
fear'd.

From our first Charles by force we
wrung our claims.

Prick'd by the Papal spur, we rear'd,
We flung the burthen of the second
James.

I say, we *never* fear'd! and as for
these,

We broke them on the land, we drove
them on the seas.

And you, my Lords, you make the
people muse

In doubt if you be of our Barons'
breed —

Were those your sires who fought at
Lewes?

Is this the manly strain of Runny-
mede?

O fallen nobility that, overawed,
Would lisp in honey'd whispers of
this monstrous fraud!

We feel, at least, that silence here were
sin,

Not ours the fault if we have feeble
hosts —

If easy patrons of their kin
Have left the last free race with
naked coasts!

They knew the precious things they
had to guard;

For us, we will not spare the tyrant
one hard word.

Tho' niggard throats of Manchester
may bawl,

What England was, shall her truc
sons forget?

We are not cotton-spinners all,
But some love England and her
honor yet.

And these in our Thermopylæ shall
stand,

And hold against the world this honor
of the land.

A WELCOME TO HER ROYAL
HIGHNESS MARIE ALEXAN-
DROVNA, DUCHESS OF EDIN-
BURGH

MARCH 7, 1874

I

THE Son of him with whom we strove
for power —

Whose will is lord thro' all his world-
domain —

Who made the serf a man, and burst
his chain —

Has given our Prince his own imperial
Flower,

Alexandrovna.

And welcome, Russian flower, a peo-
ple's pride,

To Britain, when her flowers begin
to blow!

From love to love, from home to
home you go,

From mother unto mother, stately
bride,

Marie Alexandrovna!

II

The golden news along the steppes is
blown,

And at thy name the Tartar tents
are stirr'd;

Elburz and all the Caucasus have
heard;

And all the sultry palms of India
known,

Alexandrovna.

The voices of our universal sea
On capes of Afric as on cliffs of
Kent,

The Maoris and that Isle of Conti-
nent,
And loyal pines of Canada murmur
thee,

Marie Alexandrovna !

III

Fair empires branching, both, in lusty
life !—

Yet Harold's England fell to Norman
swords ;

Yet thine own land has bow'd to
Tartar hordes

Since English Harold gave its throne
a wife,

Alexandrovna !

For thrones and peoples are as waifs
that swing,

And float or fall, in endless ebb and
flow ;

But who love best have best the
grace to know

That Love by right divine is deathless
king,

Marie Alexandrovna !

IV

And Love has led thee to the stranger
land,

Where men are bold and strongly
say their say ;—

See, empire upon empire smiles to-
day,

As thou with thy young lover hand in
hand,

Alexandrovna !

So now thy fuller life is in the west,
Whose hand at home was gracious
to thy poor ;

Thy name was blest within the nar-
row door ;

Here also, Marie, shall thy name be
blest,

Marie Alexandrovna !

V

Shall fears and jealous hatreds flame
again ?

Or at thy coming, Princess, every-
where,

The blue heaven break, and some
diviner air

Breathe thro' the world and change
the hearts of men,

Alexandrovna ?

But hearts that change not, love that
cannot cease,

And peace be yours, the peace of
soul in soul !

And howsoever this wild world may
roll,

Between your peoples truth and man-
ful peace,

Alfred — Alexandrovna !

IN THE GARDEN AT SWAINS- TON

NIGHTINGALES warbled without,
Within was weeping for thee ;

Shadows of three dead men

Walk'd in the walks with me,

Shadows of three dead men, and
thou wast one of the three.

Nightingales sang in his woods,
The Master was far away ;

Nightingales warbled and sang

Of a passion that lasts but a day ;

Still in the house in his coffin the
Prince of courtesy lay.

Two dead men have I known

In courtesy like to thee ;

Two dead men have I loved

With a love that ever will be ;

Three dead men have I loved, and
thou art last of the three.

CHILD SONGS

I

THE CITY CHILD

DAINTY little maiden, whither would
you wander ?

Whither from this pretty home, the
home where mother dwells ?

'Far and far away,' said the dainty
little maiden,

'All among the gardens, auriculas,
anemones,

Roses and lilies and Canterbury
bells.'

Dainty little maiden, whither would
you wander ?

Whither from this pretty house,
this city-house of ours ?
'Far and far away,' said the dainty
little maiden,
'All among the meadows, the clover
and the clematis,
Daisies and kingcups and honey-
suckle-flowers.'

II

MINNIE AND WINNIE

MINNIE and Winnie
Slept in a shell.
Sleep, little ladies!
And they slept well.

Pink was the shell within,
Silver without;
Sounds of the great sea
Wander'd about.

Sleep, little ladies !
Wake not soon !
Echo on echo
Dies to the moon.

Two bright stars
Peep'd into the shell.
'What are they dreaming of ?
Who can tell ?'

Started a green linnet
Out of the croft ;
Wake, little ladies !
The sun is aloft !

THE SPITEFUL LETTER

HERE, it is here, the close of the year,
And with it a spiteful letter.

My name in song has done him much
wrong,
For himself has done much better.

O little bard, is your lot so hard,
If men neglect your pages ?
I think not much of yours or of mine,
I hear the roll of the ages.

Rhymes and rhymes in the range of
the times !

Are mine for the moment stronger ?

Yet hate me not, but abide your lot ;
I last but a moment longer.

This faded leaf, our names are as brief ;
What room is left for a hater ?
Yet the yellow leaf hates the greener
leaf,
For it hangs one moment later.

Greater than I — is that your cry ?
And men will live to see it.
Well — if it be so — so it is, you know ;
And if it be so, so be it.

Brief, brief is a summer leaf,
But this is the time of hollies.
O hollies and ivies and evergreens,
How I hate the spites and the follies !

LITERARY SQUABBLES

AN God ! the petty fools of rhyme
That shriek and sweat in pigmy wars
Before the stony face of Time,
And look'd at by the silent stars ;

Who hate each other for a song,
And do their little best to bite
And pinch their brethren in the throng,
And scratch the very dead for spite ;

And strain to make an inch of room
For their sweet selves, and cannot
hear
The sullen Lethe rolling doom
On them and theirs and all things
here ;

When one small touch of Charity
Could lift them nearer Godlike state
Than if the crowded Orb should cry
Like those who cried Diana great.

And I too talk, and lose the touch
I talk of. Surely, after all,
The noblest answer unto such
Is perfect stillness when they brawl.

THE VICTIM

I

A PLAGUE upon the people fell,
A famine after laid them low ;
Then thorpe and byre arose in fire,
For on them brake the sudden foe ;

So thick they died the people cried,
 'The Gods are moved against the
 land.'

The Priest in horror about his altar
 To Thor and Odin lifted a hand:
 'Help us from famine
 And plague and strife!
 What would you have of us?
 Human life?
 Were it our nearest,
 Were it our dearest, —
 Answer, O answer! —
 We give you his life.'

II

But still the foeman spoil'd and burn'd,
 And cattle died, and deer in wood,
 And bird in air, and fishes turn'd
 And whiten'd all the rolling flood;
 And dead men lay all over the way,
 Or down in a furrow scathed with
 flame;
 And ever and aye the Priesthood
 moan'd,
 Till at last it seem'd that an answer
 came:

'The King is happy
 In child and wife;
 Take you his dearest,
 Give us a life.'

III

The Priest went out by heath and
 hill;
 The King was hunting in the wild;
 They found the mother sitting still;
 She cast her arms about the child.
 The child was only eight summers old,
 His beauty still with his years in-
 creased,
 His face was ruddy, his hair was gold;
 He seem'd a victim due to the priest.
 The Priest beheld him,
 And cried with joy,
 'The Gods have answer'd;
 We give them the boy.'

IV

The King return'd from out the wild,
 He bore but little game in hand;
 The mother said, 'They have taken
 the child
 To spill his blood and heal the land.
 The land is sick, the people diseased,
 And blight and famine on all the
 lea;

The holy Gods, they must be appeased,
 So I pray you tell the truth to me.
 They have taken our son,
 They will have his life.
 Is *he* your dearest?
 Or I, the wife?'

V

The King bent low, with hand on
 brow,
 He stay'd his arms upon his knee:
 'O wife, what use to answer now?
 For now the Priest has judged for
 me.'
 The King was shaken with holy fear;
 'The Gods,' he said, 'would have
 chosen well;
 Yet both are near, and both are dear,
 And which the dearest I cannot
 tell!
 But the Priest was happy,
 His victim won:
 'We have his dearest,
 His only son!'

VI

The rites prepared, the victim bared,
 The knife uprising toward the blow,
 To the altar-stone she sprang alone:
 'Me, not my darling, no!'
 He caught her away with a sudden
 cry;
 Suddenly from him brake his wife,
 And shrieking, 'I am his dearest, I —
 I am his dearest!' rush'd on the
 knife.
 And the Priest was happy:
 'O Father Odin,
 We give you a life.
 Which was his nearest?
 Who was his dearest?
 The Gods have answer'd;
 We give them the wife!'

WAGES

GLORY of warrior, glory of orator,
 glory of song,
 Paid with a voice flying by to be lost
 on an endless sea —
 Glory of Virtue, to fight, to struggle,
 to right the wrong —
 Nay, but she aim'd not at glory, no
 lover of glory she;
 Give her the glory of going on, and
 still to be.

The wages of sin is death: if the
wages of Virtue be dust,
Would she have heart to endure for
the life of the worm and the
fly?

She desires no isles of the blest, no
quiet seats of the just,
To rest in a golden grove, or to
bask in a summer sky;
Give her the wages of going on, and
not to die.

THE HIGHER PANTHEISM

THE sun, the moon, the stars, the seas,
the hills and the plains, —
Are not these, O Soul, the Vision of
Him who reigns?

Is not the Vision He, tho' He be not
that which He seems?
Dreams are true while they last, and
do we not live in dreams?

Earth, these solid stars, this weight of
body and limb,
Are they not sign and symbol of thy
division from Him?

Dark is the world to thee; thyself art
the reason why,
For is He not all but thou, that hast
power to feel 'I am I'?

Glory about thee, without thee; and
thou fulfillest thy doom,
Making Him broken gleams and a
stifled splendor and gloom.

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears,
and Spirit with Spirit can
meet —

Closer is He than breathing, and
nearer than hands and feet.

God is law, say the wise; O Soul, and
let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thun-
der is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some; no God at all,
says the fool,
For all we have power to see is a
straight staff bent in a pool;

And the ear of man cannot hear, and
the eye of man cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this
Vision — were it not He?

THE VOICE AND THE PEAK

I

THE voice and the Peak
Far over summit and lawn,
The lone glow and long roar
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones
of dawn!

II

All night have I heard the voice
Rave over the rocky bar,
But thou wert silent in heaven,
Above thee glided the star.

III

Hast thou no voice, O Peak,
That standest high above all?
'I am the voice of the Peak,
I roar and rave, for I fall.

IV

'A thousand voices go
To North, South, East, and West;
They leave the heights and are
troubled,
And moan and sink to their rest.

V

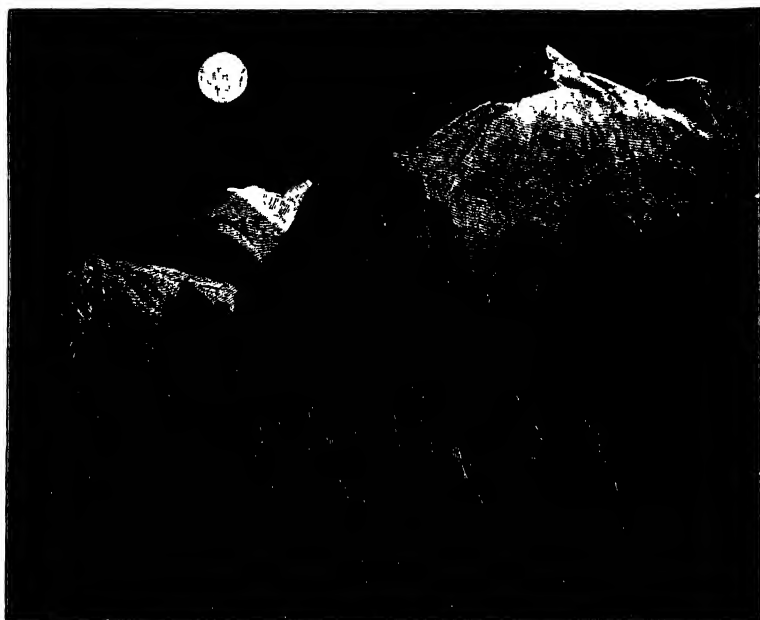
'The fields are fair beside them,
The chestnut towers in his bloom;
But they — they feel the desire of the
deep —
Fall, and follow their doom.

VI

'The deep has power on the height,
And the height has power on the
deep;
They are raised for ever and ever,
And sink again into sleep.'

VII

Not raised for ever and ever,
But when their cycle is o'er,
The valley, the voice, the peak, the
star
Pass, and are found no more.



‘Hast thou no voice, O Peak’

VIII

The Peak is high and flush’d
At his highest with sunrise fire;
The Peak is high, and the stars are high,
And the thought of a man is higher.

IX

A deep below the deep,
And a height beyond the height!
Our hearing is not hearing,
And our seeing is not sight.

X

The voice and the Peak
Far into heaven withdrawn,
The lone glow and long roar
Green-rushing from the rosy thrones
of dawn!

‘FLOWER IN THE CRANNIED
WALL’

FLOWER in the crannied wall,
I pluck you out of the crannies,

I hold you here, root and all, in my
hand,
Little flower— but *if* I could under-
stand
What you are, root and all, and all in
all,
I should know what God and man is.

LUCRETIVS

LUCILIA, wedded to Lucretius, found
Her master cold; for when the morn-
ing flush
Of passion and the first embrace had
died
Between them, tho’ he loved her none
the less,
Yet often when the woman heard his
foot
Return from pacings in the field, and
ran
To greet him with a kiss, the master
took

Small notice, or austere, for—his
 mind
 Half buried in some weightier argu-
 ment,
 Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the rise
 And long roll of the hexameter—he
 past¹¹
 To turn and ponder those three hun-
 dred scrolls
 Left by the Teacher, whom he held
 divine.
 She brook'd it not, but wrathful, pet-
 ulant,
 Dreaming some rival, sought and
 found a witch
 Who brew'd the philtre which had
 power, they said,
 To lead an errant passjon home again.
 And this, at times, she mingled with
 his drink,
 And this destroy'd him; for the wicked
 broth
 Confused the chemic labor of the
 blood,²⁰
 And tickling the brute brain within
 the man's
 Made havoc among those tender cells,
 and check'd
 His power to shape. He loathed him-
 self, and once
 After a tempest woke upon a morn
 That mock'd him with returning calm,
 and cried:

'Storm in the night! for thrice I
 heard the rain
 Rushing; and once the flash of a
 thunderbolt—
 Methought I never saw so fierce a
 fork—
 Struck out the streaming mountain-
 side, and show'd
 A riotous confluence of watercourses
 Blanching and billowing in a hollow
 of it,³¹
 Where all but yester-eve was dusty-
 dry.

'Storm, and what dreams, ye holy
 Gods, what dreams!
 For thrice I waken'd after dreams.
 Perchance
 We do but recollect the dreams that
 come
 Just ere the waking. Terrible: for it
 seem'd

A void was made in Nature; all be-
 bonds
 Crack'd; and I saw the flaring atom-
 streams
 And torrents of her myriad universe,
 Ruining along the illimitable inane,⁴⁰
 Fly on to clash together again, and
 make
 Another and another frame of things
 For ever. That was mine, my dream,
 I knew it—
 Of and belonging to me, as the dog
 With inward yelp and restless forefoot
 plies
 His function of the woodland; but the
 next!
 I thought that all the blood by Sylla
 shed
 Came driving rainlike down again on
 earth,
 And where it dash'd the reddening
 meadow, sprang
 No dragon warriors from Cadmean
 teeth,⁵⁰
 For these I thought my dream would
 show to me,
 But girls, Hetairai, curious in their
 art,
 Hired animalisms, vile as those that
 made
 The mulberry-faced Dictator's orgies
 worse
 Than aught, they fable of the quiet
 Gods,
 And hands they mixt, and yell'd and
 round me drove
 In narrowing circles till I yell'd again
 Half-suffocated, and sprang up, and
 saw—
 Was it the first beam of my latest day?

'Then, then, from utter gloom stood
 out the breasts,⁶⁰
 The breasts of Helen, and hoveringly
 a sword
 Now over and now under, now direct,
 Pointed itself to pierce, but sank down
 shamed
 At all that beauty; and as I stared, a
 fire,
 The fire that left a roofless Iliou,
 Shot out of them, and scorch'd me that
 I woke.

'Is this thy vengeance, holy Venus,
 thine,

Because I would not one of thine own
doves,
Not even a rose, were offer'd to thee ?
thine,
Forgetful how my rich proëmion
makes⁷⁰
Thy glory fly along the Italian field,
In lays that will outlast thy deity ?

'Deity ? nay, thy worshippers. My
tongue
Trips, or I speak profanely. Which
of these
Angers thee most, or angers thee at
all ?
Not if thou be'st of those who, far
aloof
From envy, hate and pity, and spite
and scorn,
Live the great life which all our great-
est fain
Would follow, centred in eternal calm.

'Nay, if thou canst, O Goddess, like
ourselves⁸⁰
Touch, and be touch'd, then would I
cry to thee
To kiss thy Mavors, roll thy tender
arms
Round him, and keep him from the
lust of blood
That makes a steaming slaughter-
house of Rome.

'Ay, but I meant not thee ; I meant
not her
Whom all the pines of Ida shook to see
Slide from that quiet heaven of hers,
and tempt
The Trojan, while his nentherds were
abroad ;
Nor her that o'er her wounded hunter
wept
Her deity false in human-amorous
tears :⁹⁰
Nor whom her beardless apple-arbiter
Decided fairest. Rather, O ye Gods,
Poet-like, as the great Sicilian called
Calliope to grace his golden verse —
Ay, and this Kypriis also — did I take
That popular name of thine to shadow
forth
The all-generating powers and genial
heat
Of Nature, when she strikes thro' the
thick blood

Of cattle, and light is large, and lambs
are glad
Nosing the mother's udder, and the
bird¹⁰⁰
Makes his heart voice amid the blaze
of flowers ;
Which things appear the work of
mighty Gods.

'The Gods ! and if I go *my* work is
left
Unfinish'd — *if* I go. The Gods, whc
haunt
The lucid interspace of world and
world,
Where never creeps a cloud, or moves
a wind,
Nor ever falls the least white star of
snow,
Nor ever lowest roll of thunder moans,
Nor sound of human sorrow mounts
to mar
Their sacred everlasting calm ! and
such,¹¹⁰
Not all so fine, nor so divine a calm,
Not such, nor all unlike it, man may
gain
Letting his own life go. The Gods,
the Gods !
If all be atoms, how then should the
Gods
Being atomic not be dissoluble,
Not follow the great law ? My master
held
That Gods there are, for all men so
believe.
I prest my footsteps into his, and meant
Surely to lead my Memmius in a
train
Of flowery clauses onward to the proof
That Gods there are, and deathless.
Meant ? I meant ?¹²¹
I have forgotten what I meant ; my
mind
Stumbles, and all my faculties are
lamed.

'Look where another of our Gods,
the Sun,
Apollo, Delius, or of older use
All-seeing Hyperion — what you
will —
Has mounted yonder ; since he never
sware,
Except his wrath were wreak'd on
wretched man.

That he would only shine among the
 dead
 Hereafter — tales! for never yet on
 earth¹³⁰
 Could dead flesh creep, or bits of roast-
 ing ox
 Moan round the spit — nor knows he
 what he sees;
 King of the East altho' he seem, and
 girt
 With song and flame and fragrance,
 slowly lifts
 His golden feet on those empurpled
 stairs
 That climb into the windy halls of
 heaven.
 And here he glances on an eye new-
 born,
 And gets for greeting but a wail of
 pain;
 And here he stays upon a freezing
 orb
 That fain would gaze upon him to the
 last;¹⁴⁰
 And here upon a yellow eyelid fallen
 And closed by those who mourn a
 friend in vain,
 Not thankful that his troubles are no
 more.
 And me, altho' his fire is on my face
 Blinding, he sees not, nor at all can tell
 Whether I mean this day to end my-
 self,
 Or lend an ear to Plato where he says,
 That men like soldiers may not quit
 the post
 Allotted by the Gods. But he that
 holds
 The Gods are careless, wherefore need
 he care¹⁵⁰
 Greatly for them, nor rather plunge at
 once,
 Being troubled, wholly out of sight,
 and sink
 Past earthquake — ay, and gout and
 stone, that break
 Body toward death, and palsy, death-
 in-life,
 And wretched age — and worst dis-
 ease of all,
 These prodigies of myriad nakednesses,
 And twisted shapes of lust, unspeak-
 able,
 Abominable, strangers at my hearth
 Not welcome, harpies miring every
 dish,

The phantom husks of something
 foully done,¹⁶⁰
 And fleeting thro' the boundless uni-
 verse,
 And blasting the long quiet of my
 breast
 With animal heat and dire insanity?

'How should the mind, except it
 loved them, clasp
 These idols to herself? or do they fly
 Now thinner, and now thicker, like
 the flakes
 In a fall of snow, and so press in, per-
 force
 Of multitude, as crowds that in an
 hour
 Of civic tumult jam the doors, and
 bear
 The keepers down, and throng, their
 rags and they¹⁷⁰
 The basest, far into that council-hall
 Where sit the best and stateliest of
 the land?

'Can I not fling this horror off me
 again,
 Seeing with how great ease Nature
 can smile,
 Balmier and nobler from her bath of
 storm,
 At random ravage? and how easily
 The mountain there has cast his cloudy
 slough,
 Now towering o'er him in serenest air,
 A mountain o'er a mountain, — ay,
 and within
 All hollow as the hopes and fears of
 men?¹⁸⁰

'But who was he that in the garden
 snared
 Picus and Faunus, rustic Gods? a tale
 To laugh at — more to laugh at in
 myself —
 For look! what is it? there? yon ar-
 butus
 Totters; a noiseless riot underneath
 Strikes through the wood, sets all the
 tops quivering —
 The mountain quickens into Nymph
 and Faun;
 And here an Orcad — how the sun de-
 lights
 To glance and shift about her slippery
 sides,

And rosy knees and supple rounded-
ness,¹⁹⁰
And budded bosom-peaks—who this
way runs
Before the rest!—A satyr, a satyr, see,
Follows; but him I proved impossible;
Twy-natured is no nature. Yet he
draws
Nearer and nearer, and I scan him
now
Beastlier than any phantom of his kind
That ever butted his rough brother-
brute
For lust or lusty blood or provender.
I hate, abhor, spit, sicken at him;
and she
Loathes him as well; such a precipi-
tate heel,²⁰⁰
Fledged as it were with Mercury's
ankle-wing,
Whirls her to me—but will she fling
herself
Shameless upon me? Catch her, goat-
foot! nay,
Hide, hide them, million-myrtled wil-
derness,
And cavern-shadowing laurels, hide!
do I wish—
What?—that the bush were leafless?
or to whelm
All of them in one massacre? O ye
Gods,
I know you careless, yet, behold, to
you
From childly wont and ancient use I
call—
I thought I lived securely as your-
selves—²¹⁰
No lewdness, narrowing envy, mon-
key-spite,
No madness of ambition, avarice, none;
No larger feast than under plane or
pine
With neighbors laid along the grass,
to take
Only such cups as left us friendly-
warm,
Affirming each his own philosophy—
Nothing to mar the sober majesties
Of settled, sweet, Epicurean life.
But now it seems some unseen mon-
ster lays
His vast and filthy hands upon my
will,²²⁰
Wrenching it backward into his, and
spoils

My bliss in being; and it was not
great,
For save when shutting reasons up in
rhythm,
Or Heliconian honey in living words,
To make a truth less harsh, I often
grew
Tired of so much within our little life,
Or of so little in our little life—
Poor little life that toddles half an
hour
Crown'd with a flower or two, and
there an end—
And since the nobler pleasure seems
to fade,²³⁰
Why should I, beastlike as I find my-
self,
Not manlike end myself?—our privi-
lege—
What beast has heart to do it? And
what man,
What Roman would be dragg'd in
triumph thus?
Not I; not he, who bears one name
with her
Whose death-blow struck the dateless
doom of kings,
When, brooking not the Tarquin in
her veins,
She made her blood in sight of Collatine
And all his peers, flushing the guilt-
less air,
Spout from the maiden fountain in
her heart.²⁴⁰
And from it sprang the Common-
wealth, which breaks
As I am breaking now!

‘And therefore now
Let her, that is the womb and tomb
of all,
Great Nature, take, and forcing far
apart
Those blind beginnings that have
made me man,
Dash them anew together at her will
Thro' all her cycles—into man once
more,
Or beast or bird or fish, or opulent
flower.
But till this cosmic order everywhere
Shatter'd into one earthquake in one
day²⁵⁰
Cracks all to pieces,—and that hour
perhaps
Is not so far when momentary man

Shall seem no more a something to
 himself,
 But he, his hopes and hates, his homes
 and fanes,
 And even his bones long laid within
 the grave,
 The very sides of the grave itself shall
 pass,
 Vanishing, atom and void, atom and
 void,
 Into the unseen for ever, — till that
 hour,
 My golden work in which I told a
 truth
 That stays the rolling Ixionian wheel,
 And numbs the Fury's ringlet-snake,
 and plucks ²⁶¹
 The mortal soul from out immortal
 hell,
 Shall stand. Ay, surely; then it fails
 at last
 And perishes as I must; for O Thou,
 Passionless bride, divine Tranquillity,
 Yearn'd after by the wisest of the wise,
 Who fail to find thee, being as thou art

Without one pleasure and without one
 pain,
 Howbeit I know thou surely must be
 mine ²⁶⁹
 Or soon or late, yet out of season, thus
 I woo thee roughly, for thou carest not
 How roughly men may woo thee so
 they win —
 Thus — thus — the soul flies out and
 dies in the air.'

With that he drove the knife into
 his side.
 She heard him raging, heard him fall,
 ran in,
 Beat breast, tore hair, cried out upon
 herself
 As having fail'd in duty to him,
 shriek'd
 That she but meant to win him back,
 fell on him,
 Clasp'd, kiss'd him, wail'd. He an-
 swer'd, 'Care not thou!
 Thy duty? What is duty? Fare thee
 well!' ²⁸⁰



‘The home of my love’

THE WINDOW; OR, THE SONG OF THE WRENS

WORDS WRITTEN FOR MUSIC

THE MUSIC BY ARTHUR SULLIVAN

Four years ago Mr. Sullivan requested me to write a little song-cycle, German fashion, for him to exercise his art upon. He had been very successful in setting such old songs as ‘Orpheus with his lute,’ and I drest up for him, partly in the old style, a puppet whose almost only merit is, perhaps, that it can dance to Mr. Sullivan’s instrument. I am sorry that my four-year-old puppet should have to dance at all in the dark shadow of these days; but the music is now completed, and I am bound by my promise.

A. TENNYSON.

December, 1870.

ON THE HILL

THE lights and shadows fly!
Yonder it brightens and darkens down
on the plain.

A jewel, a jewel dear to a lover’s eye!
O, is it the brook, or a pool, or her
window-pane,
When the winds are up in the
morning?

Clouds that are racing above,
 And winds and lights and shadows
 that cannot be still,
 All running on one way to the home
 of my love,
 You are all running on, and I stand
 on the slope of the hill,
 And the winds are up in the
 morning! 10

Follow, follow the chase!
 And my thoughts are as quick and as
 quick, ever on, on, on.
 O lights, are you flying over her
 sweet little face?
 And my heart is there before you are
 come, and gone,
 When the winds are up in the
 morning!

Follow them down the slope!
 And I follow them down to the win-
 dow-pane of my dear,
 And it brightens and darkens and
 brightens like my hope,
 And it darkens and brightens and
 darkens like my fear,
 And the winds are up in the
 morning! 20

AT THE WINDOW

Vine, vine and eglantine,
 Clasp her window, trail and twine!
 Rose, rose and clematis,
 Trail and twine and clasp and kiss,
 Kiss, kiss; and make her a bower
 All of flowers, and drop me a
 flower,
 Drop me a flower.

Vine, vine and eglantine,
 Cannot a flower, a flower, be mine?
 Rose, rose and clematis, 30
 Drop me a flower, a flower to kiss,
 Kiss, kiss—and out of her bower
 All of flowers, a flower, a flower,
 Dropt, a flower.

GONE

Gone!
 Gone, till the end of the year,
 Gone, and the light gone with her,
 and left me in shadow here!
 Gone—flitted away,

Taken the stars from the night and
 the sun from the day!
 Gone, and a cloud in my heart, and a
 storm in the air! 40
 Flown to the east or the west, flitted
 I know not where!
 Down in the south is a flash and a
 groan: she is there! she is
 there!

WINTER

The frost is here,
 And fuel is dear,
 And woods are sear,
 And fires burn clear,
 And frost is here
 And has bitten the heel of the going
 year.

Bite, frost, bite!
 You roll up away from the light 50
 The blue wood-louse and the plump
 dormouse,
 And the bees are still'd, and the flies
 are kill'd,
 And you bite far into the heart of the
 house,
 But not into mine.

Bite, frost, bite!
 The woods are all the searer,
 The fuel is all the dearer,
 The fires are all the clearer.
 My spring is all the nearer,
 You have bitten into the heart of the
 earth, 60
 But not into mine.

SPRING

Birds' love and birds' song
 Flying here and there,
 Birds' song and birds' love,
 And you with gold for hair!
 Birds' song and birds' love,
 Passing with the weather,
 Men's song and men's love,
 To love once and for ever.

Men's love and birds' love, 70
 And women's love and men's!
 And you my wren with a crown of
 gold,
 You my queen of the wrens!

You the queen of the wrens —
 We'll be birds of a feather,
 I'll be King of the Queen of the
 wrens,
 And all in a nest together.

THE LETTER

Where is another sweet as my sweet,
 Fine of the fine, and shy of the
 shy?
 Fine little hands, fine little feet — 80
 Dewy blue eye.
 Shall I write to her? shall I go?
 Ask her to marry me by and by?
 Somebody said that she'd say no;
 Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

Ay or no, if ask'd to her face?
 Ay or no, from shy of the shy?
 Go, little letter, apace, apace,
 Fly;
 Fly to the light in the valley below — 89
 Tell my wish to her dewy blue eye.
 Somebody said that she'd say no;
 Somebody knows that she'll say ay!

NO ANSWER

The mist and the rain, the mist and
 the rain!
 Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?
 And never a glimpse of her window-
 pane!
 And I may die but the grass will
 grow,
 And the grass will grow when I am
 gone,
 And the wet west wind and the
 world will go on. 99

Ay is the song of the wedded spheres,
 No is trouble and cloud and storm,
 Ay is life for a hundred years,
 No will push me down to the
 worm,
 And when I am there and dead and
 gone,
 The wet west wind and the world
 will go on.

The wind and the wet, the wind and
 the wet!
 Wet west wind, how you blow, you
 blow!

And never a line from my lady yet!
 Is it ay or no? is it ay or no?
 Blow then, blow, and when I am
 gone, 110
 The wet west wind and the world
 may go on.

NO ANSWER

Winds are loud and you are dumb,
 Take my love, for love will come,
 Love will come but once a life.
 Winds are loud and winds will pass!
 Spring is here with leaf and grass;
 Take my love and be my wife.
 After-loves of maids and men
 Are but dainties drest again.
 Love me now, you'll love me then; 120
 Love can love but once a life.

THE ANSWER

Two little hands that meet,
 Claspt on her seal, my sweet!
 Must I take you and break you,
 Two little hands that meet?
 I must take you, and break you,
 And loving hands must part —
 Take, take — break, break —
 Break — you may break my heart.
 Faint heart never won — 130
 Break, break, and all's done.

AY

Be merry, all birds, to-day,
 Be merry 'on earth as you never
 were merry before,
 Be merry in heaven, O larks, and far
 away,
 And merry for ever and ever, and
 one day more.

Why?
 For it's easy to find a rhyme.
 Look, look, how he flits,
 The fire-crown'd king of the wrens
 from out of the pine!
 Look how they tumble the blossom,
 the mad little tits! 140
 'Cuck-oo! Cuck-oo!' was ever a
 May so fine?

Why?
 For it's easy to find a rhyme.
 O merry the linnet and dove,

And swallow and sparrow and
 throstle, and have your desire !
 O merry my heart, you have gotten
 the wings of love,
 And flit like the king of the wrens
 with a crown of fire.
 Why ?
 For it's ay ay, ay ay.

• WHEN

Sun comes, moon comes, 150
 Time slips away.
 Sun sets, moon sets,
 Love, fix a day.

‘A year hence, a year hence.’
 ‘We shall both be gray.’
 ‘A month hence, a month hence.’
 ‘Far, far away.’

‘A week hence, a week hence.’
 ‘Ah, the long delay !’
 ‘Wait a little, wait a little, 160
 You shall fix a day.’

‘To-morrow, love, to-morrow,
 And that's an age away.’
 Blaze upon her window, sun,
 And honor all the day.

MARRIAGE MORNING

Light, so low upon earth,
 You send a flash to the sun.
 Here is the golden close of love,
 All my wooing is done.
 O, the woods and the meadows, 170
 Woods where we hid from the wet,
 Stiles where we stay'd to be kind,
 Meadows in which we met !

Light, so low in the vale
 You flash and lighten afar,
 For this is the golden morning of
 love,
 And you are his morning star.
 Flash, I am coming. I come,
 By meadow and stile and wood,
 O, lighten into my eyes and my 180
 heart,
 Into my heart and my blood !

Heart, are you great enough
 For a love that never tires ?
 O heart, are you great enough for
 love ?
 I have heard of thorns and briers.
 Over the thorns and briers,
 Over the meadows and stiles,
 Over the world to the end of it
 Flash for a million miles.



'She was dark-hair'd, dark-eyed'

THE LOVER'S TALE

The original Preface to 'The Lover's Tale' states that it was composed in my nineteenth year. Two only of the three parts then written were printed, when, feeling the imperfection of the poem, I withdrew it from the press. One of my friends, however, who, boylike, admired the boy's work, distributed among our common associates of that hour some copies of these two parts, without my knowledge, without the omissions and amendments which I had in contemplation, and marred by the many misprints of the compositor. Seeing that these two parts have of late been mercilessly pirated, and that what I had deemed scarce worthy to live is not allowed to die, may I not be pardoned if I suffer the whole poem at last to come into the light — accompanied with a reprint of the sequel — a work of my mature life — 'The Golden Supper'?

May, 1879.

ARGUMENT

Julian, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavors to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel. He speaks (in Parts II. and III.) of having been haunted by visions and the sound of bells, tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.

I

HERE far away, seen from the top-
most cliff,
Filling with purple gloom the vacan-
cies

Between the tufted hills, the sloping
scas
Hung in mid-heaven, and half-way
down rare sails,
White as white clouds, floated from
sky to sky.

O pleasant breast of waters, quiet bay,
 Like to a quiet mind in the loud world,
 Where the chafed breakers of the outer sea
 Sank powerless, as anger falls aside
 And withers on the breast of peaceful love!¹⁰
 Thou didst receive the growth of pines
 that fledged
 The hills that watch'd thee, as Love
 watcheth Love,
 In thine own essence, and delight thyself
 To make it wholly thine on sunny days.
 Keep thou thy name of 'Lover's Bay.'
 See, sirs,
 Even now the Goddess of the Past,
 that takes
 The heart, and sometimes touches but
 one string
 That quivers and is silent, and sometimes
 Sweeps suddenly all its half-moulder'd
 chords
 To some old melody, begins to play²⁰
 That air which pleased her first. I feel
 thy breath;
 I come, great Mistress of the ear and
 eye;
 Thy breath is of the pine-wood, and
 tho' years
 Have hollow'd out a deep and stormy
 strait
 Betwixt the native land of Love and
 me,
 Breathe but a little on me, and the
 sail
 Will draw me to the rising of the sun,
 The lucid chambers of the morning
 star,
 And East of Life.

Permit me, friend, I prythee,
 To pass my hand across my brows, and
 muse³⁰
 On those dear hills, that nevermore
 will meet
 The sight that throbs and aches be-
 neath my touch,
 As tho' there beat a heart in either eye;
 For when the outer lights are darken'd
 thus,
 The memory's vision hath a keener
 edge.

It grows upon me now — the semi-
 circle
 Of dark-blue waters and the narrow
 fringe
 Of curving beach — its wreaths of drip-
 ping green —
 Its pale pink shells — the summer-
 house aloft
 That open'd on the pines with doors of
 glass,⁴⁰
 A mountain nest — the pleasure-boat
 that rock'd,
 Light-green with its own shadow, keel
 to keel,
 Upon the dappled dimplings of the
 wave
 That blanch'd upon its side.

O Love, O Hope!
 They come, they crowd upon me all
 at once —
 Moved from the cloud of unforgetten
 things,
 That sometimes on the horizon of the
 mind
 Lies folded, often sweeps athwart in
 storm —
 Flash upon flash they lighten thro' me
 — days
 Of dewy dawning and the amber
 eyes⁵⁰
 When thou and I, Camilla, thou and I
 Were borne about the bay or safely
 moor'd
 Beneath a low-brow'd cavern, where
 the tide
 Plash'd, sapping its worn ribs; and all
 without
 The slowly-riding rollers on the
 cliffs
 Clash'd, calling to each other, and thro'
 the arch
 Down those loud waters, like a setting
 star,
 Mixt with the gorgeous west the light-
 house shone,
 And silver-smiling Venus ere she fell
 Would often loiter in her balmy
 blue,⁶⁰
 To crown it with herself.

Here, too, my love
 Waver'd at anchor with me, when day
 hung
 From his mid-dome in heaven's airy
 halls;

Gleams of the water-circles as they
broke
Flicker'd like doubtful smiles about
her lips,
Quiver'd a flying glory on her hair,
Leapt like a passing thought across
her eyes;
And mine with one that will not pass,
till earth
And heaven pass too, dwelt on my
heaven, a face
Most starry-fair, but kindled from
within⁷⁰
As 't were with dawn. She was dark-
hair'd, dark-eyed—
O, such dark eyes! a single glance of
them
Will govern a whole life from birth to
death,
Careless of all things else, led on with
light
In trances and in visions. Look at
them,
You lose yourself in utter ignorance;
You cannot find their depth; for they
go back,
And farther back, and still withdraw
themselves
Quite into the deep soul, that evermore
Fresh springing from her fountains in
the brain,⁸⁰
Still pouring thro', floods with redun-
dant life
Her narrow portals.

Trust me, long ago
I should have died, if it were possible
To die in gazing on that perfectness
Which I do bear within me. I had
died,
But from my farthest lapse, my latest
ebb,
Thine image, like a charm of light and
strength
Upon the waters, push'd me back again
On these deserted sands of barren life.
Tho' from the deep vault where the
heart of Hope⁹⁰
Fell into dust, and crumbled in the
dark—
Forgetting how to render beautiful
Her countenance with quick and
healthful blood—
Thou didst not sway me upward;
could I perish
While thou, a meteor of the sepulchre,

Didst swathe thyself all round Hope's
quiet urn
For ever? He that saith it hath o'er-
stept
The slippery footing of his narrow wit,
And fallen away from judgment.
Thou art light,
To which my spirit leaneth all her
flowers,¹⁰⁰
And length of days, and immortality
Of thought, and freshness ever self-
renew'd.
For Time and Grief abode too long
with Life,
And, like all other friends i' the world,
at last
They grew weary of her fellowship.
So Time and Grief did beckon unto
Death,
And Death drew nigh and beat the
doors of Life;
But thou didst sit alone in the inner
house,
A wakeful portress, and didst parle
with Death,—
'This is a charmed dwelling which I
hold;'¹¹⁰
So Death gave back, and would no
further come.
Yet is my life nor in the present time,
Nor in the present place. To me alone,
Push'd from his chair of regal heritage,
The Present is the vassal of the Past;
So that, in that I *have* lived, do I live,
And cannot die, and am, in having
been—
A portion of the pleasant yesterday,
Thrust forward on to-day and out of
place;
A body journeying onward, sick with
toil,¹²⁰
The weight as if of age upon my limbs,
The grasp of hopeless grief about my
heart,
And all the senses weaken'd, save in
that,
Which long ago they had glean'd and
garner'd up
Into the granaries of memory—
The clear brow, bulwark of the pre-
cious brain,
Chink'd as you see, and seam'd—and
all the while
The light soul twines and mingles with
the growths
Of vigorous early days, attracted, won,

Married, made one with, molten into
 all 130
 The beautiful in Past of act or place,
 And like the all-enduring camel, driven
 Far from the diamond fountain by the
 palms,
 Who toils across the middle moonlit
 nights,
 Or when the white heats of the blind-
 ing noons
 Beat from the concave sand; yet in
 him keeps
 A draught of that sweet fountain that
 he loves,
 To stay his feet from falling and his
 spirit
 From bitterness of death.

Ye ask me, friends,
 When I began to love. How should I
 tell you? 140
 Or from the after-fulness of my heart,
 Flow back again unto my slender
 spring
 And first of love, tho' every turn and
 depth
 Between is clearer in my life than all
 Its present flow. Ye know not what
 ye ask.
 How should the broad and open flower
 tell
 What sort of bud it was, when, prest
 together
 In its green sheath, close-lapt in silken
 folds,
 It seem'd to keep its sweetness to itself,
 Yet was not the less sweet for that it
 seem'd? 150
 For young Life knows not when young
 Life was born,
 But takes it all for granted: neither
 Love,
 Warm in the heart, his cradle, can re-
 member
 Love in the womb, but resteth satis-
 fied,
 Looking on her that brought him to
 the light;
 Or as men know not when they fall
 asleep
 Into delicious dreams, our other life,
 So know I not when I began to love.
 This is my sum of knowledge—that
 my love
 Grew with myself—say rather, was
 my growth, 160

My inward sap, the hold I have on
 earth,
 My outward circling air wherewith I
 breathe,
 Which yet upholds my life, and ever-
 more
 Is to me daily life and daily death.
 For how should I have lived and not
 have loved?
 Can ye take off the sweetness from the
 flower,
 The color and the sweetness from the
 rose,
 And place them by themselves; or set
 apart
 Their motions and their brightness
 from the stars,
 And then point out the flower or the
 star? 170
 Or build a wall betwixt my life and
 love,
 And tell me where I am? 'Tis even
 thus:
 In that I live I love; because I love
 I live. What'e'er is fountain to the
 one
 Is fountain to the other; and whene'er
 Our God unknits the riddle of the one,
 There is no shade or fold of mystery
 Swathing the other.

Many, many years—
 For they seem many and my most of
 life,
 And well I could have linger'd in that
 porch, 180
 So unproportion'd to the dwelling-
 place,—
 In the May-dews of childhood, oppo-
 site
 The flush and dawn of youth, we lived
 together,
 Apart, alone together on those hills.

Before he saw my day my father
 died,
 And he was happy that he saw it not;
 But I and the first daisy on his grave
 From the same clay came into light at
 once.
 As Love and I do number equal years,
 So she, my love, is of an age with me.
 How like each other was the birth of
 each! 191
 On the same morning, almost the same
 hour,

Under the selfsame aspect of the stars—

O, falsehood of all star-craft!—we were born.

How like each other was the birth of each!

The sister of my mother—she that bore Camilla close beneath her beating heart,

Which to the imprison'd spirit of the child,

With its true-touched pulses in the flow And hourly visitation of the blood, ²⁰⁰

Sent notes of preparation manifold, And mellow'd echoes of the outer world—

My mother's sister, mother of my love, Who had a twofold claim upon my heart,

One twofold mightier than the other was,

In giving so much beauty to the world, And so much wealth as God had charged her with—

Loathing to put it from herself for ever,

Left her own life with it; and dying thus,

Crown'd with her highest act the placid face ²¹⁰

And breathless body of her good deeds past.

So were we born, so orphan'd. She was motherless,

And I without a father. So from each Of those two pillars which from earth uphold

Our childhood, one had fallen away, and all

The careful burthen of our tender years Trembled upon the other. He that gave

Her life, to me delightedly fulfill'd All loving kindnesses, all offices

Of watchful care and trembling tenderness. ²²⁰

He waked for both, he pray'd for both, he slept

Dreaming of both; nor was his love the less

Because it was divided, and shot forth Boughs on each side, laden with whole-

some shade, Wherein we nested sleeping or awake,

And sang aloud the matin-song of life.

She was my foster-sister. On one arm

The flaxen ringlets of our infancies Wander'd, the while we rested; one

soft lap Pillow'd us both; a common light of eyes ²³⁰

Was on us as we lay; our baby lips, Kissing one bosom, ever drew from

thence The stream of life, one stream, one life, one blood,

One sustenance, which, still as thought grew large,

Still larger moulding all the house of thought,

Made all our tastes and fancies like, perhaps—

All—all but one; and strange to me, and sweet,

Sweet thro' strange years to know that whatsoe'er

Our general mother meant for me alone,

Our mutual mother dealt to both of us. ²⁴⁰

So what was earliest mine in earliest life,

I shared with her in whom myself remains.

As was our childhood, so our infancy,

They tell me, was a very miracle Of fellow-feeling and communion.

They tell me that we would not be alone,—

We cried when we were parted; when I wept,

Her smile lit up the rainbow on my tears,

Stay'd on the cloud of sorrow; that we loved

The sound of one another's voices more Than the gray cuckoo loves his name,

and learn'd ²⁵⁰

To lisp in tune together; that we slept In the same cradle always, face to face,

Heart beating time to heart, lip pressing lip,

Folding each other, breathing on each other,

Dreaming together—dreaming of each other,

They should have added,—till the morning light

Sloped thro' the pines, upon the dewy
pane
Falling, unseal'd our eyelids, and we
woke
To gaze upon each other. If this be
true, ²⁶⁰
At thought of which my whole soul
languishes
And faints, and hath no pulse, no
breath—as tho'
A man in some still garden should in-
fuse
Rich atar in the bosom of the rose,
Till, drunk with its own wine, and
overfull
Of sweetness, and in smelling of itself,
It fall on its own thorns—if this be
true—
And that way my wish leads me ever-
more
Still to believe it, 'tis so sweet a
thought—
Why in the utter stillness of the
soul ²⁷⁰
Doth question'd memory answer not,
nor tell
Of this our earliest, our closest-drawn,
Most loveliest, earthly-heavenliest har-
mony?

O blossom'd portal of the lonely
house,
Green prelude, April promise, glad
new-year
Of being, which with earliest violets
And lavish carol of clear-throated larks
Fill'd all the March of life!—I will
not speak of thee,
These have not seen thee, these can
never know thee,
They cannot understand me. Pass
we then ²⁸⁰
A term of eighteen years. Ye would
but laugh
If I should tell you how I heard in
thought
The faded rhymes and scraps of an
cient crones,
Gray relics of the nurseries of the
world,
Which are as gems set in my memory,
Because she learnt them with me; or
what use
To know her father left us just before
The daffodil was blown? or how we
found

The dead man cast upon the shore?
All this
Seems to the quiet daylight of your
minds ²⁹⁰
But cloud and smoke, and in the dark
of mine
Is traced with flame. Move with me
to the event.

There came a glorious morning,
such a one
As dawns but once a season. Mercury
On such a morning would have flung
himself
From cloud to cloud, and swum with
balanced wings
To some tall mountain. When I said
to her,
'A day for gods to stoop,' she an-
swered, 'Ay,
And men to soar;' for as that other
gazed,
Shading his eyes till all the fiery cloud,
The prophet and the chariot and the
steeds, ³⁰¹
Suck'd into oneness like a little star
Were drunk into the inmost blue, we
stood,
When first we came from out the
pines at noon,
With hands for caves, uplooking and
almost
Waiting to see some blessed shape in
heaven,
So bathed we were in brilliance.
Never yet
Before or after have I known the spring
Pour with such sudden deluges of light
Into the middle summer; for that day
Love, rising, shook his wings, and
charged the winds ³¹¹
With spiced May-sweets from bound
to bound, and blew
Fresh fire into the sun, and from
within
Burst thro' the heated buds, and sent
his soul
Into the songs of birds, and touch'd
far-off
His mountain-altars, his high hills,
with flame
Milder and purer.

Thro' the rocks we wound:
The great pine shook with lonely
sounds of joy

That came on the sea-wind. As mountain streams
 Our bloods ran free; the sunshine seem'd to brood³²⁰
 More warmly on the heart than on the brow.
 We often paused, and, looking back, we saw
 The clefts and openings in the mountains fill'd
 With the blue valley and the glistening brooks.
 And all the low dark groves, a land of love!
 A land of promise, a land of memory,
 A land of promise flowing with the milk
 And honey of delicious memories!
 And down to sea, and far as eye could ken,
 Each way from verge to verge a Holy Land,³³⁰
 Still growing holier as you near'd the bay,
 For there the Temple stood.

When we had reach'd
 The grassy platform on some hill, I stoop'd,
 I gather'd the wild herbs, and for her brows
 And mine made garlands of the self-same flower,
 Which she took smiling, and with my work thus
 Crown'd her clear forehead. Once or twice she told me—
 For I remember all things—to let grow
 The flowers that run poison in their veins.
 She said, 'The evil flourish in the world'³⁴⁰
 Then playfully she gave herself the lie—
 'Nothing in nature is unbeautiful;
 So, brother, pluck and spare not.' So
 . I wove
 Even the dull-blooded poppy-stem,
 ' whose flower,
 Hued with the scarlet of a fierce sunrise,
 Like to the wild youth of an evil prince,
 Is without sweetness, but who crowns himself
 Above the naked poisons of his heart

In his old age.' A graceful thought of hers
 Graven on my fancy! And O, how like a nymph,³⁵⁰
 A stately mountain nymph she look'd! how naive
 Unto the hills she trod on! While I gazed
 My coronal slowly disentwined itself
 And fell between us both; tho' while I gazed
 My spirit leap'd as with those thrills of bliss
 That strike across the soul in prayer, and show us
 That we are surely heard. Methought a light
 Burst from the garland I had woven, and stood
 A solid glory on her bright black hair;
 A light methought broke from her dark, dark eyes,³⁶⁰
 And shot itself into the singing winds;
 A mystic light flash'd even from her white robe
 As from a glass in the sun, and fell about
 My footsteps on the mountains.

Last we came
 To what our people call 'The Hill of Woe.'
 A bridge is there, that, look'd at from beneath,
 Seems but a cobweb filament to link
 The yawning of an earthquake-cloven chasin.
 And thence one night, when all the winds were loud,
 A woful man—for so the story went—
 Had thrust his wife and child and dash'd himself³⁷
 Into the dizzy depth below. Below, Fierce in the strength of far descent,
 a stream
 Flies with a shatter'd foam along the chasm.

The path was perilous, loosely strown with crags.
 We mounted slowly; yet to both there came
 The joy of life in steepness overcome,
 And victories of ascent, and looking down

On all that had look'd down on us ; and
 joy
 In breathing nearer heaven ; and joy
 to me, ³⁸⁰
 High over all the azure-circled earth,
 To breathe with her as if in heaven
 itself ;
 And more than joy that I to her
 became
 Her guardian and her angel, raising
 her
 Still higher, past all peril, until she
 saw
 Beneath her feet the region far away,
 Beyond the nearest mountain's bosky
 brows,
 Arise in open prospect — heath and
 hill,
 And hollow lined and wooded to the
 lips,
 And steep-down walls of battlemented
 rock ³⁹⁰
 Gilded with broom, or shatter'd into
 spires,
 And glory of broad waters interfused,
 Whence rose as it were breath and
 steam of gold,
 And over all the great wood rioting
 And climbing, streak'd or starr'd at
 intervals
 With falling brook or blossom'd bush
 — and last,
 Framing the mighty landscape to the
 west,
 A purple range of mountain-cones,
 between
 Whose interspaces gush'd in blinding
 bursts
 The incorporate blaze of sun and sea.

At length

Descending from the point, and stand-
 ing both ⁴⁰¹
 There on the tremulous bridge, that
 from beneath
 Had seem'd a gossamer filament up in
 air,
 We paused amid the splendor. All
 the west
 And even unto the middle south was
 ribb'd
 And barr'd with bloom on bloom.
 The sun below,
 Held for a space 'twixt cloud and
 wave, shower'd down
 Rays of a mighty circle, weaving over

That various wilderness a tissue of
 light
 Unparallel'd. On the other side, the
 moon, ⁴¹⁰
 Half-melted into thin blue air, stood
 still,
 And pale and fibrous as a wither'd
 leaf,
 Nor yet endured in presence of His
 eyes
 To induce his lustre ; most unloverlike,
 Since in his absence full of light and
 joy,
 And giving light to others. But this
 most,
 Next to her presence whom I loved so
 well,
 Spoke loudly even into my inmost
 heart
 As to my outward hearing. The
 loud stream,
 Forth issuing from his portals in the
 crag, — ⁴²⁰
 A visible link unto the home of my
 heart, —
 Ran amber toward the west, and nigh
 the sea
 Parting my own loved mountains
 was received,
 Shorn of its strength, into the sympa-
 thy
 Of that small bay, which out to open
 main
 Glow'd intermingling close beneath
 the sun.
 Spirit of Love ! that little hour was
 bound,
 Shut in from Time, and dedicate to
 thee ;
 Thy fires from heaven had touch'd it,
 and the earth
 They fell on became hallow'd ever-
 more. ⁴³⁰

We turn'd, our eyes met ; hers were
 bright, and mine
 Were dim with floating tears, that
 shot the sunset
 In lightnings round me, and my name
 was borne
 Upon her breath. Henceforth my
 name has been
 A hallow'd memory like the names of
 old,
 A centred, glory-circled memory,
 And a peculiar treasure, brooking not

Exchange or currency; and in that hour

A hope flow'd round me, like a golden mist

Charm'd amid eddies of melodious airs,

A moment, ere the onward whirlwind⁴⁴⁰ shatter it,

Waver'd and floated — which was less than Hope,

Because it lack'd the power of perfect Hope;

But which was more and higher than all Hope,

Because all other Hope had lower aim;

Even that this name to which her gracious lips

Did lend such gentle utterance, this one name,

In some obscure hereafter, might inwreath —

How lovelier, nobler then! — her life, her love,

With my life, love, soul, spirit, and heart and strength.

'Brother,' she said, 'let this be call'd henceforth

The Hill of Hope;' and I replied, 'O sister,

My will is one with thine; the Hill of Hope.'

Nevertheless, we did not change the name.

I did not speak; I could not speak my love.

Love lieth deep, Love dwells not in lip-depths.

Love wraps his wings on either side the heart,

Constraining it with kisses close and warm,

Absorbing all the incense of sweet thoughts

So that they pass not to the shrine of sound.

Else had the life of that dighted hour Drunk in the largeness of the utterance

Of Love; but how should earthly measure mete

The heavenly-unmeasured or unlimited Love,

Who scarce can tune his high majestic sense

Unto the thunder-song that wheels the spheres,

Scarce living in the Æolian harmony, And flowing odor of the spacious air,

Scarce housed within the circle of this earth,

Be cabin'd up in words and syllables, Which pass with that which breathes

them? Sooner earth⁴⁷¹ Might go round heaven, and the strait girth of Time

Inswathe the fulness of Eternity, Than language grasp the infinite of Love.

O day which did enwomb that happy hour,

Thou art blessed in the years, divinest day!

O Genius of that hour which dost uphold

Thy coronal of glory like a god, Amid thy melancholy mates far-seen,

Who walk before thee, ever turning round

To gaze upon thee till their eyes are dim

With dwelling on the light and depth of thine,

Thy name is ever worshipp'd among hours!

Had I died then, I had not seem'd to die,

For bliss stood round me like the light of heaven, —

Had I died then, I had not known the death;

Yea, had the Power from whose right hand the light

Of Life issueth, and from whose left hand floweth

The Shadow of Death, perennial effluences,

Whereof to all that draw the wholesome air,

Somewhile the one must overflow the other —

Then had he stemm'd my day with night, and driven

My current to the fountain whence it sprang, —

Even his own abiding excellence — On me, methinks, that shock of gloom

had fallen Unfelt, and in this glory I had merged

The other, like the sun I gazed upon.

Which seeming for the moment due to death,
 And dipping his head low beneath the verge,
 Yet bearing round about him his own day,
 In confidence of unabated strength,
 Steppeth from heaven to heaven,
 from light to light,
 And holdeth his undimmed forehead far
 Into a clearer zenith, pure of cloud.

We trod the shadow of the downward hill ;
 We past from light to dark. On the other side
 Is scoop'd a cavern and a mountain hall,
 Which none have fathom'd. If you go far in —
 The country people rumor — you may hear
 The moaning of the woman and the child,
 Shut in the secret chambers of the rock.
 I too have heard a sound — perchance of streams
 Running far on within its inmost halls,
 The home of darkness ; but the cavern-mouth,
 Half overtrailed with a wanton weed,
 Gives birth to a brawling brook, that passing lightly
 Adown a natural stair of tangled roots,
 Is presently received in a sweet grave
 Of eglantines, a place of burial
 Far lovelier than its cradle ; for unseen
 But taken with the sweetness of the place,
 It makes a constant bubbling melody
 That drowns the nearer echoes.
 Lower down
 Spreads out a little lake, that, flooding, leaves
 Low banks of yellow sand ; and from the woods
 That belt it rise three dark, tall cypresses, —
 Three cypresses, symbols of mortal woe,
 That men plant over graves.

Hither we came,
 And sitting down upon the golden moss,
 Held converse sweet and low — low converse sweet,
 In which our voices bore least part.
 The wind
 Told a love-tale beside us, how he woo'd
 The waters, and the waters answering lisp'd
 To kisses of the wind, that, sick with love,
 Fainted at intervals, and grew again
 To utterance of passion. Ye cannot shape
 Fancy so fair as is this memory.
 Methought all excellence that ever was
 Had drawn herself from many thousand years,
 And all the separate Edens of this earth,
 To centre in this place and time. I listen'd,
 And her words stole with most prevailing sweetness
 Into my heart, as thronging fancies come
 To boys and girls when summer days are new,
 And soul and heart and body are all at ease.
 What marvel my Camilla told me all ?
 It was so happy an hour, so sweet a place,
 And I was as the brother of her blood,
 And by that name I moved upon her breath ;
 Dear name, which had too much of nearness in it
 And heralded the distance of this time !
 At first her voice was very sweet and low,
 As if she were afraid of utterance ;
 But in the onward current of her speech, —
 As echoes of the hollow-banked brooks
 Are fashion'd by the channel which they keep, —
 Her words did of their meaning borrow sound,
 Her cheek did catch the color of her words.
 I heard and trembled, yet I could but hear :



'Lower down
Spreads out a little lake'

My heart paused — my raised eyelids
would not fall, 560
But still I kept my eyes upon the sky.
I seem'd the only part of 'Time stood
still,

And saw the motion of all other things ;
While her words, syllable by syllable,
Like water, drop by drop, upon my ear
Fell, and I wish'd, yet wish'd her not
to speak ;

But she spake on, for I did name no
wish.

What marvel my Camilla told me all
Her maiden dignities of Hope and
Love —

'Perchance,' she said, 'return'd' ?

Even then the stars 570
Did tremble in their stations as I gazed ;
But she spake on, for I did name no
wish,

No wish — no hope. Hope was not
wholly dead,

But breathing hard at the approach of
death, —

Camilla, my Camilla, who was mine
No longer in the dearest sense of
mine —

For all the secret of her inmost heart,
And all the maiden empire of her mind,
Lay like a map before me, and I saw
There, where I hoped myself to reign
as king, 580

There, where that day I crown'd my-
self as king,

There in my realm and even on my
throne,

Another ! Then it seem'd as tho' a link
Of some tight chain within my inmost
frame

Was riven in twain ; that life I heeded
not

Flow'd from me, and the darkness of
the grave,

The darkness of the grave and utter
night,

Did swallow up my vision ; at her feet,
Even the feet of her I loved, I fell,

Smit with exceeding sorrow unto
death. 590

Then had the earth beneath me
yawning cloven

With such a sound as when an iceberg
splits

From cope to base — had Heaven from
all her doors,

With all her golden thresholds clash-
ing, roll'd

Her heaviest thunder — I had lain as
dead,

Mute, blind, and motionless as then I
lay ;

Dead, for henceforth there was no life
for me !

Mute, for henceforth what use were
words to me ?

Blind, for the day was as the night to
me !

The night to me was kinder than the
day ;

The night in pity took away my day,
Because my grief as yet was newly
born

Of eyes too weak to look upon the
light ;

And thro' the hasty notice of the ear
Frail Life was startled from the tender
love

Of him she brooded over. Would I had
lain

Until the plaited ivy-tress had wound
Round my worn limbs, and the wild
brier had driven

Its knotted thorns thro' my unpaining
brows,

Leaning its roses on my faded eyes.
The wind had blown above me, and
the rain

Had fallen upon me, and the gilded
snake

Had nestled in this bosom-throne of
Love,

But I had been at rest for evermore.

Long time entrancement held me.

All too soon

Life—like a wanton, too-officious
friend,

Who will not *hear* denial, vain and rude
With proffer of unwish'd-for services—
Entering all the avenues of sense
Past thro' into his citadel, the brain,
With hated warmth of apprehensive-
ness.

And first the chillness of the sprinkled
brook

Smote on my brows, and then I seem'd
to hear

Its murmur, as the drowning seaman
hears,

Who with his head below the surface
dropt

Listens the muffled booming indistinct
Of the confused floods, and dimly
knows

His head shall rise no more ; and then
came in

The white light of the weary moon
above,

Diffused and molten into flaky cloud.

Was my sight drunk that it did shape
to me

Him who should own that name ?
Were it not well

If so be that the echo of that name
Ringing within the fancy had updrawn
A fashion and a phantasm of the form
It should attach to ? Phantom !—had
the ghastliest

That ever lusted for a body, sucking
The foul steam of the grave to thicken
by it,

There in the shuddering moonlight
brought its face

And what it has for eyes as close to
mine

As he did—better that than his, thar.
he

The friend, the neighbor, Lionel, the
beloved,

The loved, the lover, the happy Lionel,
The low-voiced, tender-spirited Lionel,

All joy, to whom my agony was a joy.
O, how her choice did leap forth from
his eyes !

O, how her love did clothe itself in
smiles

About his lips ! and—not one mo-
ment's grace—

Then when the effect weigh'd seas
upon my head

To come my way ! to twit me with
the cause !

Was not the land as free thro' all
her ways

To him as me ? Was not his wont to
walk

Between the going light and growing
night ?

Had I not learnt my loss before he
came ?

Could that be more because he came
my way ?

Why should he not come my way if
he would ?

And yet to-night, to-night—when all
my wealth

Flash'd from me in a moment and I
fell

Beggar'd for ever—why *should* he
come my way

Robed in those robes of light I must
not wear,

With that great crown of beams about
his brows—

Come like an angel to a damned soul,
To tell him of the bliss he had with
God —

Come like a careless and a greedy heir
That scarce can wait the reading of
the will

Before he takes possession ? Was mine
a mood

To be invaded rudely, and not rather
A sacred, secret, unapproached woe,
Unspeakable ? I was shut up with
Grief ;

She took the body of my past delight,
Narded and swathed and balm'd it for
herself, 671

And laid it in a sepulchre of rock
Never to rise again. I was led mute
Into her temple like a sacrifice ;

I was the High Priest in her holiest
place,

Not to be loudly broken in upon.

O friend, thoughts deep and heavy
as these well-nigh

O'erbore the limits of my brain : but he
Bent o'er me, and my neck his arm
upstay'd.

I thought it was an adder's fold, and
once 680

I strove to disengage myself, but
fail'd,

Being so feeble. She bent above me,
too ;

Wan was her cheek, for whatsoe'er of
blight

Lives in the dewy touch of pity had
made

The red rose there a pale one — and
her eyes —

I saw the moonlight glitter on their
tears —

And some few drops of that distress-
ful rain

Fell on my face, and her long ringlets
moved,

Drooping and beaten by the breeze,
and brush'd

My fallen forehead in their to and fro,
For in the sudden anguish of her
heart 691

Loosed from their simple thrall they
had flow'd abroad,

And floated on and parted round her
neck,

Mantling her form halfway. She,
when I woke,

Something she ask'd, I know not what,
and ask'd,

Unanswer'd, since I spake not ; for the
sound

Of that dear voice so musically
low,

And now first heard with any sense of
pain,

As it had taken life away before,
Choked all the syllables that strove to
rise 700

From my full heart.

The blissful lover, too,

From his great hoard of happiness dis-
till'd

Some drops of solace : like a vain rich
man,

That, having always prosper'd in the
world,

Folding his hands, deals comfortable
words

To hearts wounded for ever ; yet, in
truth,

Fair speech was his and delicate of
phrase,

Falling in whispers on the sense, ad-
dress'd

More to the inward than the outward
ear,

As rain of the midsummer midnight
soft, 710

Scarce-heard, recalling fragrance and
the green

Of the dead spring : but mine was
wholly dead,

No bud, no leaf, no flower, no fruit for
me.

Yet who had done, or who had suffer'd
wrong ?

And why was I to darken their pure
love ?

If, as I found, they two did love each
other,

Because my own was darken'd ? Why
was I

To cross between their happy star and
them ?

To stand a shadow by their shining
doors,

And vex them with my darkness ? Did
I love her ? 720

Ye know that I did love her ; to this
present

My full-orb'd love has waned not. Did
I love her,

And could I look upon her tearful eyes?

What had *she* done to weep? Why should *she* weep?

O innocent of spirit — let my heart
Break rather — whom the gentlest airs
of heaven

Should kiss with an unwonted gentleness.

Her love did murder mine? What then? She deem'd

I wore a brother's mind; she call'd me brother.

She told me all her love; she shall not weep. 730

The brightness of a burning thought,
awhile

In battle with the glooms of my dark will,

Moonlike emerged, and to itself lit up
There on the depth of an unfathom'd woe

Reflex of action. Starting up at once,
As from a dismal dream of my own death,

I, for I loved her, lost my love in Love;
I, for I loved her, graspt the hand she loved,

And laid it in her own, and sent my cry

Thro' the blank night to Him who loving made 740

The happy and the unhappy love, that He

Would hold the hand of blessing over them,

Lionel, the happy, and her, and her, his bride!

Let them so love that men and boys may say,

'Lo! how they love each other!' till their love

Shall ripen to a proverb, unto all Known, when their faces are forgot in the land —

One golden dream of love, from which may death

Awake them with heaven's music in a life

More living to some happier happiness, 750

Swallowing its precedent in victory.

And as for me, Camilla, as for me, —
The dew of tears is an unwholesome dew,

They will but sicken the sick plant the more.

Deem that I love thee but as brothers do,

So shalt thou love me still as sisters do;
Or if thou dream aught farther, dream but how

I could have loved thee, had there been none else

To love as lovers, loved again by thee.

Or this, or somewhat like to this, I spake, 760

When I beheld her weep so ruefully;
For sure my love should ne'er induce the front

And mask of Hate, who lives on others' moans.

Shall Love pledge Hatred in her bitter draughts,

And batten on her poisons? Love forbid!

Love passeth not the threshold of cold Hate,

And Hate is strange beneath the roof of Love.

O Love, if thou be'st Love, dry up these tears

Shed for the love of Love; for tho' mine image,

The subject of thy power, be cold in her, 770

Yet, like cold snow, it melteth in the source

Of these sad tears, and feeds their downward flow.

So Love, arraign'd to judgment and to death,

Received unto himself a part of blame,
Being guiltless, as an innocent prisoner,

Who, when the woful sentence hath been past,

And all the clearness of his fame hath gone

Beneath the shadow of the curse of man,

First falls asleep in swoon, wherefrom awaked,

And looking round upon his tearful friends, 780

Forthwith and in his agony conceives
A shameful sense as of a cleaving crime —

For whence without some guilt should such grief be?

So died that hour, and fell into the
 abyss
 Of forms outworn, but not to me out-
 worn,
 Who never hail'd another — was there
 one ?
 There might be one — one other, worth
 the life
 That made it sensible. So that hour
 died
 Like odor rapt into the winged wind
 Borne into alien lands and far away.

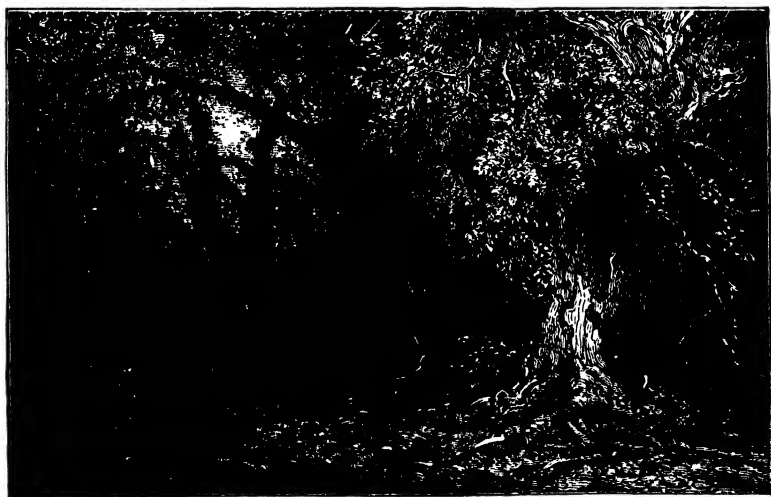
There be some hearts so airily built,
 that they, ⁷⁹¹
 They — when their love is wreck'd —
 if Love can wreck —
 On that sharp ridge of utmost doom
 ride highly
 Above the perilous seas of Change and
 Chance,
 Nay, more, hold out the lights of
 cheerfulness ;
 As the tall ship, that many a dreary
 year
 Knit to some dismal sandbank far at
 sea,
 All thro' the livelong hours of utter
 dark,
 Showers slanting light upon the dolor-
 ous wave.

For me — what light, what gleam on
 those black ways ⁸⁰⁰
 Where Love could walk with banish'd
 Hope no more ?

It was ill-done to part you, sisters
 fair ;
 Love's arms were wreath'd about the
 neck of Hope,
 And Hope kiss'd Love, and Love drew
 in her breath
 In that close kiss, and drank her whis-
 per'd tales.
 They said that Love would die when
 Hope was gone,
 And Love mourn'd long, and sorrow'd
 after Hope ;
 At last she sought out Memory, and
 they trod
 The same old paths where Love had
 walk'd with Hope,
 And Memory fed the soul of Love with
 tears. ⁸¹⁰

II

From that time forth I would not see
 her more ;
 But many weary moons I lived alone —
 Alone, and in the heart of the great
 forest.



‘ In the heart of the great forest ’

Sometimes upon the hills beside the
 sea
 All day I watch'd the floating isles of
 shade,
 And sometimes on the shore, upon the
 sands
 Insensibly I drew her name, until
 The meaning of the letters shot into
 My brain; anon the wanton billow
 wash'd
 Them over, till they faded like my
 love.
 The hollow caverns heard me—the
 black brooks
 Of the mid-forest heard me—the soft
 winds,
 Laden with thistle-down and seeds of
 flowers,
 Paused in their course to hear me, for
 my voice
 Was all of thee; the merry linnet
 knew me,
 The squirrel knew me, and the dragon-
 fly
 Shot by me like a flash of purple fire.
 The rough brier tore my bleeding
 palms; the hemlock,
 Brow-high, did strike my forehead as
 I past;
 Yet trod I not the wild-flower in my
 path,
 Nor bruised the wild-bird's egg.

Was this the end?
 Why grew we then together in one
 plot?
 Why fed we from one fountain? drew
 one sun?
 Why were our mothers branches of
 one stem?
 Why were we one in all things, save
 in that
 Where to have been one had been the
 cope and crown
 Of all I hoped and fear'd?—if that
 same nearness
 Were father to this distance, and that
 one
 Vauntcourier to this double? if Affec-
 tion
 Living slew Love, and Sympathy
 hew'd out
 The bosom-sepulchre of Sympathy?

Chiefly I sought the cavern and the
 hill

Where last we roam'd together, for
 the sound
 Of the loud stream was pleasant, and
 the wind
 Came wooingly with woodbine smells.
 Sometimes
 All day I sat within the cavern-mouth,
 Fixing my eyes on those three cypress-
 cones
 That spired above the wood; and with
 mad hand
 Tearing the bright leaves of the ivy-
 screen,
 I cast them in the noisy brook be-
 neath,
 And watch'd them till they vanish'd
 from my sight
 Beneath the bower of wreathed eglan-
 tines.
 And all the fragments of the living
 rock,—
 Huge blocks, which some old trem-
 bling of the world
 Had loosen'd from the mountain, till
 they fell
 Half-digging their own graves,—
 these in my agony
 Did I make bare of all the golden
 moss,
 Wherewith the dashing runnel in the
 spring
 Had liveried them all over. In my
 brain
 The spirit seem'd to flag from thought
 to thought,
 As moonlight wandering thro' a mist;
 my blood
 Crept like marsh drains thro' all my
 languid limbs;
 The motions of my heart seem'd far
 within me,
 Unfrequent, low, as tho' it told its
 pulses;
 And yet it shook me, that my frame
 would shudder,
 As if 't were drawn asunder by the
 rack.
 But over the deep graves of Hope and
 Fear,
 And all the broken palaces of the past,
 Brooded one master-passion evermore,
 Like to a low-hung and a fiery sky
 Above some fair metropolis, earth-
 shock'd,—
 Hung round with ragged rims and
 burning folds,—

Embathing all with wild and woful
hues,
Great hills of ruins, and collapsed
masses
Of thunder-shaken columns indistinct,
And fused together in the tyrannous
light—
Ruins, the ruin of all my life and me !

Sometimes I thought Camilla was no
more ;
Some one had told me she was dead,
and ask'd
If I would see her burial. Then I
seem'd ⁷⁰
To rise, and through the forest-shadow
borne
With more than mortal swiftness, I ran
down
The steepy sea-bank, till I came
upon
The rear of a procession, curving round
The silver-sheeted bay, in front of
which
Six stately virgins, all in white, upbare
A broad earth-sweeping pall of whitest
lawn,
Wreathed round the bier with gar-
lands. In the distance,
From out the yellow woods upon the
hill
Look'd forth the summit and the pin-
nacles ⁸⁰
Of a gray steeple — thence at intervals
A low bell tolling. All the pageantry,
Save those six virgins which upheld
the bier,
Were stoled from head to foot in flow-
ing black ;
One walk'd abreast with me, and veil'd
his brow,
And he was loud in weeping and in
praise
Of her we follow'd. A strong sym-
pathy
Shook all my soul ; I flung myself
upon him
In tears and cries. I told him all my
love,
How I had loved her from the first ;
whereat ⁹⁰
He shrank and howl'd, and from his
brow drew back
His hand to push me from him, and
the face,
The very face and form of Lionel

Flash'd thro' my eyes into my inner-
most brain,
And at his feet I seem'd to faint and
fall,
To fall and die away. I could not
rise,
Albeit I strove to follow. They past
on,
The lordly phantasms ! in their float-
ing folds
They past and were no more ; but I
had fallen
Prone by the dashing runnel on the
grass. ¹⁰⁰

Always the inaudible, invisible
thought,
Artificer and subject, lord and slave,
Shaped by the audible and visible,
Moulded the audible and visible.
All crisped sounds of wave and leaf
and wind
Flatter'd the fancy of my fading brain ;
The cloud-pavilion'd element, the
wood,
The mountain, the three cypresses, the
cave,
Storm, sunset, glows and glories of the
moon
Below black firs, when silent-creeping
winds ¹¹⁰
Laid the long night in silver streaks
and bars,
Were wrought into the tissue of my
dream.
The moanings in the forest, the loud
brook,
Cries of the partridge like a rusty key
Turn'd in a lock, owl-whoop and dor-
hawk-whirr
Awoke me not, but were a part of
sleep,
And voices in the distance calling to
me
And in my vision bidding me dream
on,
Like sounds without the twilight
realm of dreams,
Which wander round the bases of the
hills, ¹²⁰
And murmur at the low-dropt caves of
sleep,
Half-entering the portals. Oftentimes
The vision had fair prelude, in the end
Opening on darkness, stately vesti-
bules

To caves and shows of death — whether the mind,

With some revenge — even to itself unknown —

Made strange division of its suffering

With her, whom to have suffering view'd had been

Extremest pain ; or that the clear-eyed Spirit,

Being blunted in the present, grew at length ¹³⁰

Prophetical and prescient of whate'er The future had in store ; or that which most

Enchains belief, the sorrow of my spirit

Was of so wide a compass it took in

All I had loved, and my dull agony,

Ideally to her transferr'd, became

Anguish intolerable.

The day waned ;

Alone I sat with her. About my brow Her warm breath floated in the utterance

Of silver-chorded tones ; her lips were sunder'd ¹⁴⁰

With smiles of tranquil bliss, which broke in light

Like morning from her eyes — her eloquent eyes —

As I have seen them many a hundred times —

Fill'd all with pure clear fire, thro' mine down rain'd

Their spirit-searching splendors. As a vision

Unto a haggard prisoner, iron-stay'd In damp and dismal dungeons underground,

Confined on points of faith, when strength is shock'd

With torment, and expectancy of worse

Upon the morrow, thro' the ragged walls, ¹⁵⁰

All unawares before his half-shut eyes,

Comes in upon him in the dead of night,

And with the excess of sweetness and of awe,

Makes the heart tremble, and the sight run over

Upon his steely gyves ; so those fair eyes

Shone on my darkness, forms which ever stood

Within the magic circle of memory,

Invisible but deathless, waiting still

*The edict of the will to reassume

The semblance of those rare realities Of which they were the mirrors. Now

the light ¹⁶¹

Which was their life burst through the cloud of thought

Keen, irrepressible.

It was a room

Within the summer-house of which I spake,

Hung round with paintings of the sea, and one

A vessel in mid-ocean, her heaved prow

Clambering, the mast bent and the ravin wind

In her sail roaring. From the outer day,

Betwixt the close-set ivies came a broad

And solid beam of isolated light, ¹⁷⁰

Crowded with driving atomies, and fell

Slanting upon that picture, from prime youth

Well-known, well-loved. She drew it long ago

Forthgazing on the waste and open sea,

One morning when the upblown billow ran

Shoreward beneath red clouds, and I had pour'd

Into the shadowing pencil's naked forms

Color and life. It was a bond and seal

Of friendship, spoken of with tearful smiles ;

A monument of childhood and of love ; ¹⁸⁰

The poesy of childhood, my lost love Symbol'd in storm. We gazed on it together

In mute and glad remembrance, and each heart

Grew closer to the other, and the eye Was riveted and charm-bound, gazing

like

The Indian on a still-eyed snake, low couch'd —

A beauty which is death ; when all at once
 That painted vessel, as with inner life,
 Began to heave upon that painted sea.
 An earthquake, my loud heart-beats,
 made the ground ¹⁹⁰
 Reel under us, and all at once, soul,
 life
 And breath and motion, past and
 flow'd away
 To those unreal billows. Round and
 round
 A whirlwind caught and bore us ;
 mighty gyres
 Rapid and vast, of hissingspray wind-
 driven
 Far thro' the dizzy dark. Aloud she
 shriek'd ;
 My heart was cloven with pain ; I
 wound my arms
 About her ; we whirl'd giddily ; the
 wind
 Sung, but I clasp'd her without fear.
 Her weight
 Shrank in my grasp, and over my dim
 eyes, ²⁰⁰
 And parted lips which drank her
 breath, down-hung
 The jaws of Death. I, groaning,
 from me flung
 Her empty phantom ; all the sway
 and whirl
 Of the storm dropt to windless calm,
 and I
 Down welter'd thro' the dark ever and
 ever.

III

I came one day and sat among the
 stones
 Strewn in the entry of the moaning
 cave ;
 A morning air, sweet after rain, ran
 over
 The rippling levels of the lake, and
 blew
 Coolness and moisture and all smells
 of bud
 And foliage from the dark and drip-
 ping woods
 Upon my fever'd brows that shook
 and throb'd
 From temple unto temple. To what
 height

The day had grown I know not.
 Then came on me
 The hollow tolling of the bell, and
 all ¹⁰
 The vision of the bier. As heretofore
 I walk'd behind with one who veil'd
 his brow.
 Methought by slow degrees the sullen
 bell
 Toll'd quicker, and the breakers on
 the shore
 Sloped into louder surf. Those that
 went with me,
 And those that held the bier before
 my face,
 Moved with one spirit round about
 the bay,
 Trod swifter steps ; and while I
 walk'd with these
 In marvel at that gradual change,
 I thought
 Four bells instead of one began to
 ring, ²⁰
 Four merry bells, four merry mar-
 riage-bells,
 In clanging cadence jangling peal on
 peal—
 A long loud clash of rapid marriage-
 bells.
 Then those who led the van, and those
 in rear,
 Rush'd into dance, and like wild
 Bacchanals
 Fled onward to the steeple in the
 woods.
 I, too, was borne along and felt the
 blast
 Beat on my heated eyelids. All at
 once
 The front rank made a sudden halt ;
 the bells
 Lapsed into frightful stillness ; the
 surge fell ³⁰
 From thunder into whispers ; those
 six maids
 With shrieks and ringing laughter on
 the sand
 Threw down the bier ; the woods
 upon the hill
 Waved with a sudden gust that
 sweeping down
 Took the edges of the pall, and blew
 it far
 Until it hung, a little silver cloud
 Over the sounding seas. I turn'd ;
 my heart

Shrank in me, like a snowflake in the hand,
 Waiting to see the settled countenance
 Of her I loved, adorn'd with fading
 flowers.
 But she from out her death-like chrysalis,
 She from her bier, as into fresher life,
 My sister, and my cousin, and my
 love,
 Leapt lightly clad in bridal white —
 her hair
 Studded with one rich Provence rose
 — a light
 Of smiling welcome round her lips —
 her eyes
 And cheeks as bright as when she
 climb'd the hill.
 One hand she reach'd to those that
 came behind,
 And while I mused nor yet endured to
 take
 So rich a prize, the man who stood
 with me
 Stept gaily forward, throwing down
 his robes,
 And claspt her hand in his. Again
 the bells
 Jangled and clang'd; again the
 stormy surf
 Crash'd in the shingle; and the whirling
 rout
 Led by those two rush'd into dance,
 and fled
 Wind-footed to the steeple in the
 woods,
 Till they were swallow'd in the leafy
 bowers,
 And I stood sole beside the vacant
 bier.

There, there, my latest vision —
 then the event !

IV

THE GOLDEN SUPPER¹

(*Another speaks*)

'He flies the event; he leaves the event
 to me.
 Poor Julian — how he rush'd away;
 the bells,

¹ This poem is founded upon a story in Boccaccio. See Introduction, p. 2.

Those marriage-bells, echoing in ear
 and heart —
 But cast a parting glance at me, you
 saw,
 As who should say 'Continue.' Well,
 he had
 One golden hour — of triumph shall I
 say ?
 Solace at least — before he left his
 home.

Would you had seen him in that
 hour of his !
 He moved thro' all of it majestically —
 Restrain'd himself quite to the close
 — but now —
 Whether they *were* his lady's marriage-
 bells,
 Or prophets of them in his fantasy,
 I never ask'd; but Lionel and the
 girl
 Were wedded, and our Julian came
 again
 Back to his mother's house among the
 pines.
 But these, their gloom, the mountains
 and the Bay,
 The whole land weigh'd him down as
Ætna does
 The Giant of Mythology; he would
 go,
 Would leave the land for ever, and
 had gone
 Surely, but for a whisper, 'Go not
 yet,'
 Some warning — sent divinely — as it
 seem'd
 By that which follow'd — but of this
 I deem
 As of the visions that he told — the
 event
 Glanced back upon them in his after
 life,
 And partly made them — tho' he knew
 it not.

And thus he stay'd and would not
 look at her —
 No, not for months; but, when the
 eleventh moon
 After their marriage lit the lover's Bay,
 Heard yet once more the tolling bell,
 and said,
 'Would you could toll me out of life !'
 but found —

All softly as his mother broke it to him —
 A crueller reason than a crazy ear
 For that low knell tolling his lady dead —
 Dead — and had lain three days without a pulse;
 All that look'd on her had pronounced her dead.
 And so they bore her — for in Julian's land
 They never nail a dumb head up in elm —
 Bore her free-faced to the free airs of heaven,
 And laid her in the vault of her own kin.

What did he then? not die — he is here and hale —
 Not plunge headforemost from the mountain there,
 And leave the name of Lover's Leap, not he.
 He knew the meaning of the whisper now,
 Thought that he knew it. 'This, I stay'd for this;
 O Love, I have not seen you for so long!
 Now, now, will I go down into the grave,
 I will be all alone with all I love,
 And kiss her on the lips. She is his no more;
 The dead returns to me, and I go down
 To kiss the dead.'

The fancy stirr'd him so
 He rose and went, and, entering the dim vault
 And making there a sudden light, beheld
 All round about him that which all will be.
 The light was but a flash, and went again.
 Then at the far end of the vault he saw
 His lady with the moonlight on her face;
 Her breast as in a shadow-prison, bars
 Of black and bands of silver, which the moon
 Struck from an open grating overhead
 High in the wall, and all the rest of her
 Drown'd in the gloom and horror of the vault.

'It was my wish,' he said, 'to pass, to sleep,
 To rest, to be with her — till the great day
 Peal'd on us with that music which rights all,
 And raised us hand in hand.' And kneeling there
 Down in the dreadful dust that once was man,
 'Dust,' as he said, 'that once was loving hearts,
 Hearts that had beat with such a love as mine —
 Not such as mine, no, nor for such as her,' —
 He softly put his arm about her neck
 And kiss'd her more than once, till helpless death
 And silence made him bold — nay, but I wrong him,
 He revered his dear lady even in death;
 But, placing his true hand upon her heart,
 'O you warm heart,' he moan'd, 'not even death
 Can chill you all at once' — then, starting, thought
 His dreams had come again. 'Do I wake or sleep?
 Or am I made immortal, or my love
 Mortal once more?' It beat — the heart — it beat;
 Faint — but it beat; at which his own began
 To pulse with such a vehemence that it drown'd
 The feebler motion underneath his hand.
 But when at last his doubts were satisfied
 He raised her softly from the sepulchre,
 And, wrapping her all over with the cloak
 He came in, and now striding fast, and now
 Sitting awhile to rest, but evermore
 Holding his golden burthen in his arms,
 So bore her thro' the solitary land
 Back to the mother's house where she was born.

There the good mother's kindly
 ministering,
 With half a night's appliances, recall'd
 Her fluttering life. She rais'd an eye
 that ask'd
 'Where?' till the things familiar to
 her youth
 Had made a silent answer; then she
 spoke
 Here! and how came I here?' and
 learning it—
 They told her somewhat rashly, as I
 think—
 At once began to wander and to
 wail,
 'Ay, but you know that you must give
 me back.
 Send! bid him come;' but Lionel was
 away—
 Stung by his loss had vanish'd, none
 knew where.
 'He casts me out,' she wept, 'and
 goes'—a wail
 That, seeming something, yet was no-
 thing, born
 Not from believing mind but shatter'd
 nerve,
 Yet haunting Julian, as her own re-
 proof
 At some precipitance in her burial.
 Then, when her own true spirit had
 return'd,
 'O, yes, and you,' she said, 'and none
 but you?
 For you have given me life and love
 again,
 And none but you yourself shall tell
 him of it,
 And you shall give me back when he
 returns.'
 'Stay then a little,' answer'd Julian,
 'here,
 And keep yourself, none knowing, to
 yourself;
 And I will do your will. I may not
 stay,
 No, not an hour; but send me notice
 of him
 When he returns, and then will I re-
 turn,
 And I will make a solemn offering of
 you
 To him you love.' And faintly she
 replied,
 'And I will do *your* will, and none
 shall know.'

Not know? with such a secret to be
 known.
 But all their house was old and loved
 them both,
 And all the house had known the loves
 of both,
 Had died almost to serve them any
 way,
 And all the land was waste and soli-
 tary.
 And then he rode away; but after
 this,
 An hour or two, Camilla's travail came
 Upon her, and that day a boy was born,
 Heir of his face and land, to Lionel.

And thus our lonely lover rode away,
 And pausing at a hostel in a marsh,
 There fever seized upon him. Myself
 was then
 Travelling that land, and meant to rest
 an hour;
 And sitting down to such a base repast,
 It makes me angry yet to speak of it—
 I heard a groaning overhead, and
 climb'd
 The moulder'd stairs—for everything
 was vile—
 And in a loft, with none to wait on
 him,
 Found, as it seem'd, a skeleton alone,
 Raving of dead men's dust and beating
 hearts.

A dismal hostel in a dismal land,
 A flat malarian world of reed and rush!
 But there from fever and my care of
 him
 Sprang up a friendship that may help
 us yet.
 For while we roam'd along the dreary
 coast,
 And waited for her message, piece by
 piece
 I learnt the drearier story of his life;
 And, tho' he loved and honor'd Lionel,
 Found that the sudden wail his lady
 made
 Dwelt in his fancy. Did he know her
 worth,
 Her beauty even? should he not be
 taught,
 Even by the price that others set upon
 it,
 The value of that jewel he had to
 guard?

Suddenly came her notice and we
past,
I with our lover to his native Bay.

This love is of the brain, the mind,
the soul;
That makes the sequel pure, tho' some
of us
Beginning at the sequel know no more.
Not such am I; and yet I say the
bird
That will not hear my call, however
sweet,
But if my neighbor whistle answers
him—
What matter? there are others in the
wood.
Yet when I saw her—and I thought
him crazed,
Tho' not with such a craziness as needs
A cell and keeper—those dark eyes
of hers—
O, such dark eyes! and not her eyes
alone,
But all from these to where she touch'd
on earth,
For such a craziness as Julian's look'd
No less than one divine apology.

So sweetly and so modestly she came
To greet us, her young hero in her
arms!
'Kiss him,' she said. 'You gave me
life again.
He, but for you, had never seen it
once.
His other father you! Kiss him, and
then
Forgive him, if his name be Julian
too.'

Talk of lost hopes and broken heart!
his own
Sent such a flame into his face, I knew
Some sudden vivid pleasure hit him
there.

But he was all the more resolved to
go,
And sent at once to Lionel, praying
him,
By that great love they both had
borne the dead,
To come and revel for one hour with
him
Before he left the land for evermore;

And then to friends—they were not
many—who lived
Scatteringly about that lonely land of
his,
And bade them to a banquet of fare-
wells.

And Julian made a solemn feast; I
never
Sat at a costlier, for all round his hall
From column on to column, as in a
wood,
Not such as here—an equatorial one,
Great garlands swung and blossom'd;
and beneath,
Heirlooms, and ancient miracles of
art,
Chalice and salver, wines that, heaven
knows when,
Had suck'd the fire of some forgotten
sun,
And kept it thro' a hundred years of
gloom,
Yet glowing in a heart of ruby—cups
Where nymph and god ran ever round
in gold—
Others of glass as costly—some with
gems
Movable and resettable at will,
And trebling all the rest in value—
Ah heavens!
Why need I tell you all?—suffice to
say
That whatsoever such a house as his,
And his was old, has in it rare or fair
Was brought before the guest. And
they, the guests,
Wonder'd at some strange light in
Julian's eyes—
I told you that he had his golden hour—
And such a feast, ill-suited as it seem'd
To such a time, to Lionel's loss and his
And that resolved self-exile from a land
He never would revisit, such a feast
So rich, so strange, and stranger even
than rich,
But rich as for the nuptials of a king.

And stranger yet, at one end of the
hall
Two great funereal curtains, looping
down,
Parted a little ere they met the floor,
About a picture of his lady, taken
Some years before, and falling hid
the frame.

And just above the parting was a
lamp;
So the sweet figure folded round with
night
Seem'd stepping out of darkness with
a smile.

Well, then — our solemn feast — we
ate and drank, ²²⁰
And might — the wines being of such
nobleness —
Have jested also, but for Julian's
eyes,
And something weird and wild about
it all.
What was it? for our lover seldom
spoke,
Scarce touch'd the meats, but ever
and anon
A priceless goblet with a priceless wine
Arising show'd he drank beyond his
use;
And when the feast was near an end,
he said:

'There is a custom in the Orient,
friends —
I read of it in Persia — when a man ²³⁰
Will honor those who feast with him,
he brings
And shows them whatsoever he ac-
counts
Of all his treasures the most beautiful,
Gold, jewels, arms, whatever it may
be.
This custom' —

Pausing here a moment, all
The guests broke in upon him with
meeting hands
And cries about the banquet — 'Beau-
tiful!
Who could desire more beauty at a
feast?'

The lover answer'd: 'There is more
than one
Here sitting who desires it. Laud me
not ²⁴⁰
Before my time, but hear me to the
close.
This custom steps yet further when
the guest
Is loved and honor'd to the uttermost.
For after he hath shown him gems or
gold,

He brings and sets before him in rich
guise
That which is thrice as beautiful as
these,
The beauty that is dearest to his
heart —
'O my heart's lord, would I could
show you,' he says,
'Even my heart too.' And I propose
to-night
To show you what is dearest to my
heart, ²⁵⁰
And my heart too.

'But solve me first a doubt.
I knew a man, not many years ago;
He had a faithful servant, one who
loved
His master more than all on earth be-
side.
He falling sick, and seeming close on
death,
His master would not wait until he
died,
But bade his menials bear him from
the door,
And leave him in the public way to
die.
I knew another, not so long ago,
Who found the dying servant, took
him home, ²⁶⁰
And fed, and cherish'd him, and saved
his life.
I ask you now, should this first mas-
ter claim
His service, whom does it belong to?
him
Who thrust him out, or him who
saved his life?'

This question, so flung down before
the guests,
And balanced either way by each, at
length
When some were doubtful how the
law would hold,
Was handed over by consent of all
To one who had not spoken, Lionel.

Fair speech was his, and delicate of
phrase. ²⁷⁰
And he, beginning languidly — his loss
Weigh'd on him yet — but warming
as he went,
Glanced at the point of law, to pass
it by,

Affirming that as long as either lived,
 By all the laws of love and grateful-
 ness,
 The service of the one so saved was due
 All to the saver—adding, with a smile,
 The first for many weeks—a semi-
 smile
 As at a strong conclusion—'body
 and soul
 And life and limbs, all his to work his
 will.' 280

Then Julian made a secret sign to me
 To bring Camilla down before them
 all.
 And crossing her own picture as she
 came,
 And looking as much lovelier as her-
 self
 Is lovelier than all others—on her head
 A diamond circlet, and from under this
 A veil, that seem'd no more than
 gilded air,
 Flying by each fine ear, an Eastern
 gauze
 With seeds of gold—so, with that
 grace of hers,
 Slow-moving as a wave against the
 wind, 290
 That flings a mist behind it in the sun—
 And bearing high in arms the mighty
 babe,
 The younger Julian, who himself was
 crown'd
 With roses, none so rosy as himself—
 And over all her babe and her the
 jewels
 Of many generations of his house
 Sparkled and flash'd, for he had deck'd
 them out
 As for a solemn sacrifice of love—
 'So she came in—I am long in telling
 it,
 I never yet beheld a thing so strange,
 Sad, sweet, and strange together—
 floated in—' 301
 While all the guests in mute amaze-
 ment rose—
 And slowly pacing to the middle hall,
 Before the board, there paused and
 stood, her breast
 Hard-heaving, and her eyes upon her
 feet,
 Not daring yet to glance at Lionel.
 But him she carried, him nor lights
 nor feast

Dazed or amazed, nor eyes of men;
 who cared
 Only to use his own, and staring wide
 And hungering for the gilt and jew-
 ell'd world 310
 About him, look'd, as he is like to
 prove,
 When Julian goes, the lord of all he
 saw.

'My guests,' said Julian, 'you are
 honor'd now
 Even to the uttermost; in her behold
 Of all my treasures the most beautiful,
 Of all things upon earth the dearest to
 me;
 Then waving us a sign to seat our-
 selves,
 Led his dear lady to a chair of state.
 And I, by Lionel sitting, saw his
 face
 Fire, and dead ashes and all fire again
 Thrice in a second, felt him tremble
 too, 321
 And heard him muttering, 'So like, so
 like;
 She never had a sister. I knew none.
 Some cousin of his and hers—O God,
 so like!'
 And then he suddenly ask'd her if she
 were.
 She shook, and cast her eyes down,
 and was dumb.
 And then some other question'd if she
 came
 From foreign lands, and still she did
 not speak.
 Another, if the boy were hers; but she
 To all their queries answer'd not a
 word, 330
 Which made the amazement more, till
 one of them
 Said, shuddering, 'Her spectre!' But
 his friend
 Replied, in half a whisper, 'Not at
 least
 The spectre that will speak if spoken
 to.
 Terrible pity, if one so beautiful
 Prove, as I almost dread to find her,
 dumb!'

But Julian, sitting by her, answer'd
 all:
 'She is but dumb, because in her you
 see

That faithful servant whom we spoke
about,

Obedient to her second master now ;

Which will not last. I have here to-
night a guest ³⁴¹

So bound to me by common love and
loss —

What ! shall I bind him more ? in his
behalf,

Shall I exceed the Persian, giving
him

That which of all things is the dearest
to me,

Not only showing ? and he himself
pronounced

That my rich gift is wholly mine to
give.

‘Now all be dumb, and promise all
of you

Not to break in on what I say by word
Or whisper, while I show you all my
heart.’ ³⁵⁰

And then began the story of his love
As here to-day, but not so wordily —
The passionate moment would not
suffer that —

Past thro’ his visions to the burial ;
thence

Down to this last strange hour in his
own hall ;

And then rose up, and with him all
his guests

Once more as by enchantment ; all but
he,

Lionel, who fain had risen, but fell
again,

And sat as if in chains — to whom he
said :

‘Take my free gift, my cousin, for
your wife ;’ ³⁶⁰

And were it only for the giver’s sake,

And tho’ she seem so like the one you
lost,

Yet cast her not away so suddenly,
Lest there be none left here to bring
her back.

I leave this land for ever.’ Here he
ceased.

Then taking his dear lady by one
hand,

And bearing on one arm the noble babe,
He slowly brought them both to Lio-
nel.

And there the widower husband and
dead wife

Rush’d each at each with a cry that
rather seem’d ³⁷⁰

For some new death than for a life
renew’d ;

Whereat the very babe began to wail.
At once they turn’d, and caught and
brought him in

To their charm’d circle, and, half kill-
ing him

With kisses, round him closed and
claspt again.

But Lionel, when at last he freed him-
self

From wife and child, and lifted up a
face

All over glowing with the sun of life,
And love, and boundless thanks — the
sight of this

So frightened our good friend that, turn-
ing to me ³⁸⁰

And saying, ‘It is over ; let us go’ —
There were our horses ready at the
doors —

We bade them no farewell, but mount-
ing these

He past for ever from his native land ,
And I with him, my Julian, back to
mine.



PRINCE ALBERT

IDYLLS OF THE KING IN TWELVE BOOKS

'Flos Regum Arthurus' — JOSEPH OF EXETER

DEDICATION

THESE to His Memory — since he held
them dear,
Perchance as finding there uncon-
sciously
Some image of himself — I dedicate,
I dedicate, I consecrate with tears —
These Idylls.

And indeed he seems to me
Scarce other than my king's ideal
knight,
'Who revered his conscience as his
king;
Whose glory was, redressing human
wrong;
Who spake no slander, no, nor listen'd
to it;

Who loved one only and who clave to
her' —
Her — over all whose realms to their
last isle,
Commingled with the gloom of immi-
nent war,
The shadow of his loss drew like
eclipse,
Darkening the world. We have lost
him; he is gone.
We know him now; all narrow jeal-
ousies
Are silent, and we see him as he moved,
How modest, kindly, all-accomplish'd,
wise,
With what sublime repression of him-
self,
And in what limits, and how tenderly;
Not swaying to this faction or to
that;
Not making his high place the lawless
perch
Of wing'd ambitions, nor a vantage-
ground
For pleasure; but thro' all this tract
of years
Wearing the white flower of a blame-
less life,
Before a thousand peering littlenesses,
In that fierce light which beats upon
a throne
And blackens every blot; for where
is he
Who dares foreshadow for an only
son
A lovelier life, a more unstain'd, than
his?
Or how should England dreaming of
his sons
Hope more for these than some inher-
itance
Of such a life, a heart, a mind as thine,
Thou noble Father of her Kings to be,
Laborious for her people and her
poor —
Voice in the rich dawn of an ampler
day —
Far-sighted summoner of War and
Waste
To fruitful strifes and rivalries of
peace —
Sweet nature gilded by the gracious
gleam
Of letters, dear to Science, dear to Art,
Dear to thy land and ours, a Prince
indeed,

40

Beyond all titles, and a household
name,
Hereafter, thro' all times, Albert the
Good.

Break not, O woman's-heart, but
still endure;
Break not, for thou art royal, but en-
dure,
Remembering all the beauty of that
star
Which shone so close beside thee that
ye made
One light together, but has past and
leaves
The Crown a lonely splendor.

May all love,
His love, unseen but felt, o'ershadow
thee,
The love of all thy sons encompass
thee,
The love of all thy daughters cherish
thee,
The love of all thy people comfort
thee,
Till God's love set thee at his side
again!

THE COMING OF ARTHUR

LEODOGRAN, the king of Cameliard,
Had one fair daughter, and none other
child;
And she was fairest of all flesh on
earth,
Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur
came
Ruled in this isle and, ever waging
war
Each upon other, wasted all the land;
And still from time to time the heathen
host
Swarm'd over-seas, and harried what
was left.
And so there grew great tracts of wil-
derness,
Wherein the beast was ever more and
more,
But man was less and less, till Arthur
came.
For first Aurelius lived and fought and
died,

10

And after him King Uther fought and died,
 But either fail'd to make the kingdom one.
 And after these King Arthur for a space,
 And thro' the puissance of his Table Round,
 Drew all their petty principedoms under him,
 Their king and head, and made a realm and reign'd.

And thus the land of Cameliard was waste,
 Thick with wet woods, and many a beast therein,
 And none or few to scare or chase the beast;
 So that wild dog and wolf and boar and bear
 Came night and day, and rooted in the fields,
 And wallow'd in the gardens of the King.
 And ever and anon the wolf would steal
 The children and devour, but now and then,
 Her own brood lost or dead, lent her fierce teat
 To human sucklings; and the children, housed
 In her foul den, there at their meat would growl,
 And mock their foster-mother on four feet,
 Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-like men,
 Worse than the wolves. And King Leodogran
 Groan'd for the Roman legions here again
 And Cæsar's eagle. Then his brother king,
 Urien, assail'd him; last a heathen horde,
 Reddening the sun with smoke and earth with blood,
 And on the spike that split the mother's heart
 Spitting the child, brake on him, till, amazed,
 He knew not whither he should turn for aid.

40

But — for he heard of Arthur newly crown'd,
 Tho' not without an uproar made by those
 Who cried, 'He is not Uther's son' — the King
 Sent to him, saying, 'Arise, and help us thou!
 For here between the man and beast we die.'

And Arthur yet had done no deed of arms,
 But heard the call and came; and Guinevere
 Stood by the castle walls to watch him pass;
 But since he neither wore on helm or shield
 The golden symbol of his kinglihood, But rode a simple knight among his knights,
 And many of these in richer arms than he,
 She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she saw,
 One among many, tho' his face was bare.
 But Arthur, looking downward as he past,
 Felt the light of her eyes into his life
 Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and pitch'd
 His tents beside the forest. Then he drave
 The heathen; after, slew the beast, and fell'd
 The forest, letting in the sun, and made
 Broad pathways for the hunter and the knight,
 And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,
 A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the hearts
 Of those great lords and barons of his realm
 Flash'd forth and into war; for most of these,
 Colleaguings with a score of petty kings,
 Made head against him, crying: 'Who is he

That he should rule us ? who hath
 proven him
 King Uther's son ? for lo ! we look at
 him,
 And find nor face nor bearing, limbs
 nor voice,
 Are like to those of Uther whom we
 knew.
 This is the son of Gorlois, not the
 King ;
 This is the son of Anton, not the
 King.'

And Arthur, passing thence to
 battle, felt
 travail, and throes and agonies of the
 life,
 Desiring to be join'd with Guineverc,
 And thinking as he rode : 'Her father
 said
 'That there between the man and beast
 they die.
 Shall I not lift her from this land of
 beasts
 Up to my throne and side by side
 with me ?
 What happiness to reign a lonely
 king,
 Vext—O ye stars that shudder over
 me,
 O earth that soundest hollow under
 me,
 Vext with waste dreams ? for saving
 I be join'd
 To her that is the fairest under heaven,
 I seem as nothing in the mighty
 world,
 And cannot will my will nor work my
 work
 Wholly, nor make myself in mine
 own realm
 Victor and lord. But were I join'd
 with her,
 Then might we live together as one
 life,
 And reigning with one will in every-
 thing
 Have power on this dark land to
 lighten it,
 And power on this dead world to
 make it live.'

Thereafter—as he speaks who tells
 the tale—
 When Arthur reach'd a field of battle
 bright

With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the
 world
 Was all so clear about him that he
 saw
 The smallest rock far on the faintest
 hill,
 And even in high day the morning
 star.
 So when the King had set his banner
 broad,
 At once from either side, with trum-
 pet-blast,
 And shouts, and clarions shrilling unto
 blood,
 The long-lanced battle let their horses
 run.
 And now the barons and the kings
 prevail'd,
 And now the King, as here and there
 that war
 Went swaying ; but the Powers who
 walk the world
 Made lightnings and great thunders
 over him,
 And dazed all eyes, till Arthur by
 main might,
 And mightier of his hands with every
 blow,
 And leading all his knighthood threw
 the kings,
 Carados, Urien, Cradlemon of Wales,
 Claudius, and Clariance of Northum-
 berland,
 The King Brandagoras of Latangor,
 With Anguisant of Erin, Morganore,
 And Lot of Orkney. Then, before a
 voice
 As dreadful as the shout of one who
 sees
 To one who sins, and deems himself
 alone
 And all the world asleep, they swerved
 and brake
 Flying, and Arthur call'd to stay the
 brands
 That hack'd among the flyers, 'Ho !
 they yield !'
 So like a painted battle the war
 stood
 Silenced, the living quiet as the dead,
 And in the heart of Arthur joy was
 lord.
 He laugh'd upon his warrior whom he
 loved
 And honor'd most. 'Thou dost not
 doubt me King,

So well thine arm hath wrought for
me to-day.'

'Sir and my liege,' he cried, 'the fire
of God

Descends upon thee in the battle-field.
I know thee for my King!' Whereat
the two,

For each had warded either in the
fight, ¹³⁰

Swore on the field of death a deathless
love.

And Arthur said, 'Man's word is God
in man;

Let chance what will, I trust thee to
the death.'

Then quickly from the foughten
field he sent

Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
His new made knights, to King Leo-

dogran,
Saying, 'If I in aught have served
thee well,

Give me thy daughter Guinevere to
wife.'

Whom when he heard, Leodogran
in heart

Debating — 'How should I that am a
king, ¹⁴⁰

However much he help me at my
need,

Give my one daughter saving to a
king,

And a king's son?' — lifted his voice,
and call'd

A hoary man, his chamberlain, to
whom

He trusted all things, and of him re-
quired

His counsel: 'Knowest thou aught of
Arthur's birth?'

Then spake the hoary chamberlain
and said:

'Sir King, there be but two old men
that know;

And each is twice as old as I; and one
is Merlin, the wise man that ever

served ¹⁵⁰

King Uther thro' his magic art, and
one

Is Merlin's master — so they call him
— Bleys,

Who taught him magic; but the
scholar ran

Before the master, and so far that
Bleys

Laid magic by, and sat him down,
and wrote

All things and whatsoever Merlin
did

In one great annal-book, where after-
years

Will learn the secret of our Arthur's
birth.'

To whom the King Leodogran re-
plied:

'O friend, had I been holpen half as
well ¹⁶⁰

By this King Arthur as by thee to-
day,

Then beast and man had had their
share of me;

But summer here before us yet once
more

Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere.'

Then, when they came before him,
the king said:

'I have seen the cuckoo chased by
lesser fowl,

And reason in the chase; but where-
fore now

Do these your lords stir up the heat
of war,

Some calling Arthur born of Gorlois,
Others of Anton? Tell me, ye your-

selves, ¹⁷⁰

I hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's
son?'

And Ulfius and Brastias answer'd,
'Ay.'

Then Bedivere, the first of all his
knights

Knighted by Arthur at his crowning,
spake —

For bold in heart and act and word
was he,

Whenever slander breathed against
the King —

'Sir, there be many rumors on this
head;

For there be those who hate him in
their hearts,

Call him baseborn, and since his ways
are sweet,

And theirs are bestial, hold him less
than man; ¹⁸⁰

And there be those who deem him
 more than man,
 And dream he dropt from heaven.
 But my belief
 In all this matter—so ye care to
 learn—
 Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's
 time
 The prince and warrior Gorloïs, he
 that held
 Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,
 Was wedded with a winsome wife,
 Ygerne;
 And daughters had she borne him, —
 one whereof,
 Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney,
 Bellicent,
 Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved
 To Arthur, — but a son she had not
 borne. ¹⁹¹
 And Uther cast upon her eyes of love;
 But she, a stainless wife to Gorloïs,
 So loathed the bright dishonor of his
 love
 That Gorloïs and King Uther went to
 war,
 And overthrown was Gorloïs and slain.
 Then Uther in his wrath and heat be-
 sieged
 Ygerne within Tintagil, where her
 men,
 Seeing the mighty swarm about their
 walls,
 Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd
 in, ²⁰⁰
 And there was none to call to but him-
 self.
 So, compass'd by the power of the
 king,
 Enforced she was to wed him in her
 tears,
 And with a shameful swiftness; after-
 ward,
 Not many moons, King Uther died
 himself,
 Moaning and wailing for an heir to
 rule
 After him, lest the realm should go to
 wrack.
 And that same night, the night of the
 new year,
 By reason of the bitterness and grief
 That vexed his mother, all before his
 time ²¹⁰
 Was Arthur born, and all as soon as
 born

Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate
 To Merlin, to be holden far apart
 Until his hour should come, because
 the lords
 Of that fierce day were as the lords of
 this,
 Wild beasts, and surely would have
 torn the child
 Piecemeal among them, had they
 known; for each
 But sought to rule for his own self
 and hand,
 And many hated Uther for the sake
 Of Gorloïs. Wherefore Merlin took
 the child, ²²⁰
 And gave him to Sir Anton, an old
 knight
 And ancient friend of Uther; and his
 wife
 Nursed the young prince, and rear'd
 him with her own;
 And no man knew. And ever since
 the lords
 Have foughten like wild beasts among
 themselves,
 So that the realm has gone to wrack;
 but now,
 This year, when Merlin — for his hour
 had come —
 Brought Arthur forth, and set him in
 the hall,
 Proclaiming, "Here is Uther's heir,
 your king,"
 A hundred voices cried: "Away with
 him! ²³⁰
 No king of ours! a son of Gorloïs he,
 Or else the child of Anton, and no
 king,
 Or else baseborn." Yet Merlin thro'
 his craft,
 And while the people clamor'd for a
 king,
 Had Arthur crown'd; but after, the
 great lords
 Banded, and so brake out in open war.

 Then while the king debated with
 himself
 If Arthur were the child of shameful-
 ness,
 Or born the son of Gorloïs after
 death,
 Or Uther's son and born before his
 time, ²⁴⁰
 Or whether there were truth in any-
 thing

Said by these three, there came to
Cameliard,
With Gawain and young Modred, her
two sons,
Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Belli-
cent;
Whom as he could, not as he would,
the king
Made feast for, saying, as they sat at
meat:
'A doubtful throne is ice on summer
seas.
Ye come from Arthur's court. Victor
his men
Report him! Yea, but ye — think ye
this king —
So many those that hate him, and so
strong,
So few his knights, however brave
they be —
Hath body enow to hold his foemen
down?'

'O King,' she cried, 'and I will tell
thee: few,
Few, but all brave, all of one mind
with him;
For I was near him when the savage
yells
Of Uther's peerage died, and Arthur
sat
Crowned on the dais, and his warriors
cried,
"Be thou the king, and we will work
thy will
Who love thee." Then the King in
low deep tones,
And simple words of great authority,
Bound them by so strait vows to his
own self
That when they rose, knighted from
kneeling, some
Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,
Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one
who wakes
Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

'But when he spake, and cheer'd his
Table Round
With large, divine, and comfortable
words,
Beyond my tongue to tell thee — I be-
held
From eye to eye thro' all their Order
flash
A momentary likeness of the King; 270

And ere it left their faces, thro' the
cross
And those around it and the Crucified,
Down from the casement over Arthur,
smote
Flame-color, vert, and azure, in three
rays,
One falling upon each of three fair
queens
Who stood in silence near his throne,
the friends
Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with
bright
Sweet faces, who will help him at his
need.

'And there I saw mage Merlin,
whose vast wit
And hundred winters are but as the
hands
Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege. 280

'And near him stood the Lady of
the Lake,
Who knows a subtler magic than his
own —
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
derful.
She gave the King his huge cross-
hilted sword,
Whereby to drive the heathen out. A
mist
Of incense curl'd about her, and her
face
Wellnigh was hidden in the minster
gloom;
But there was heard among the holy
hymns
A voice as of the waters, for she dwells
Down in a deep — calm, whatsoever
storms
May shake the world — and when the
surface rolls, 290
Hath power to walk the waters like
our Lord.

'There likewise I beheld Excalibur
Before him at his crowning borne, the
sword
That rose from out the bosom of the
lake,
And Arthur row'd across and took it —
rich
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
Bewildering heart and eye — the blade
so bright

That men are blinded by it — on one
 side,³⁰⁰
 Graven in the oldest tongue of all this
 world,
 "Take me," but turn the blade and ye
 shall see,
 And written in the speech ye speak
 yourself,
 "Cast me away!" And sad was
 Arthur's face
 Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd
 him,
 "Take thou and strike! the time to
 cast away
 Is yet far-off." So this great brand the
 king
 Took, and by this will beat his foemen
 down.

Thereat Leodogran rejoiced, but
 thought
 To sift his doubtings to the last, and
 ask'd,³¹⁰
 Fixing full eyes of question on her
 face,
 'The swallow and the swift are near
 akin,
 But thou art closer to this noble
 prince,
 Being his own dear sister;' and she
 said,
 'Daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne am
 I;'
 'And therefore Arthur's sister?' ask'd
 the king.
 She answer'd, 'These be secret things,'
 and sign'd
 To those two sons to pass, and let them
 be.
 And Gawain went, and breaking into
 song
 Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying
 hair³²⁰
 Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he
 saw;
 But Modred laid his ear beside the
 doors,
 And there half-heard — the same that
 afterward
 Struck for the throne, and striking
 found his doom.

And then the Queen made answer:
 'What know I?
 For dark my mother was in eyes and
 hair,

And dark in hair and eyes am I; and
 dark
 Was Gorlois; yea, and dark was Uther
 too,
 Wellnigh to blackness; but this king
 is fair
 Beyond the race of Britons and of
 men.³³⁰
 Moreover, always in my mind I hear
 A cry from out the dawning of my life,
 A mother weeping, and I hear her say,
 "O that ye had some brother, pretty
 one,
 To guard thee on the rough ways of
 the world."

'Ay,' said the king, 'and hear ye
 such a cry?
 But when did Arthur chance upon thee
 first?'

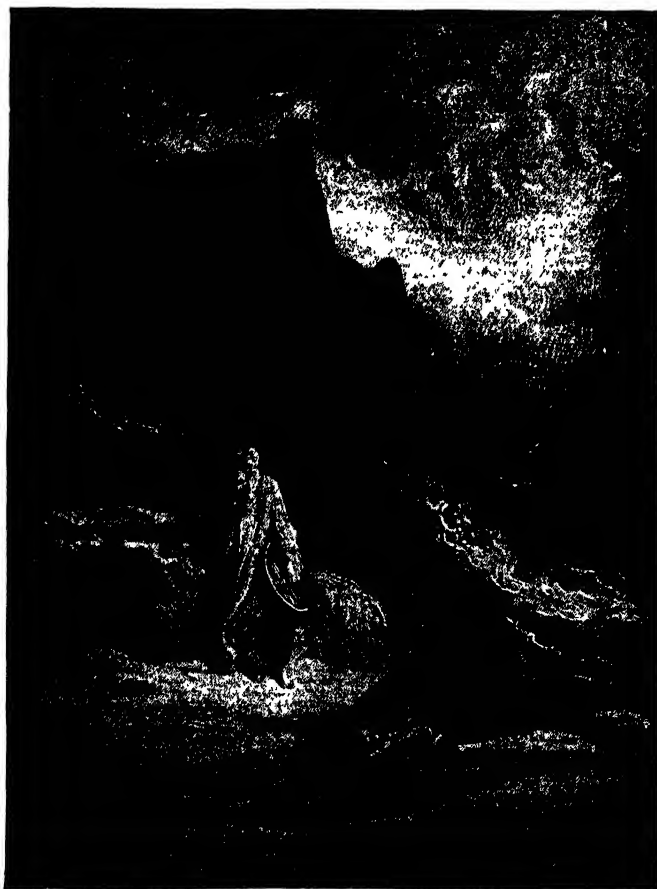
'O King!' she cried, 'and I will tell
 thee true.
 He found me first when yet a little
 maid.
 Beaten I had been for a little fault³⁴⁰
 Whereof I was not guilty; and out I
 ran
 And flung myself down on a bank of
 heath,
 And hated this fair world and all
 therein,
 And wept, and wish'd that I were
 dead; and he —
 I know not whether of himself he
 came,
 Or brought by Merlin, who, they say,
 can walk
 Unseen at pleasure — he was at my
 side,
 And spake sweet words, and com-
 forted my heart,
 And dried my tears, being a child
 with me.
 And many a time he came, and ever-
 more³⁵⁰
 As I grew greater grew with me; and
 sad
 At times he seem'd, and sad with him
 was I,
 Stern too at times, and then I loved
 him not,
 But sweet again, and then I loved
 him well.
 And now of late I see him less and
 less,

But those first days had golden hours
for me,
For then I surely thought he would
be king.

'But let me tell thee now another
tale:
For Bleys, our Merlin's master, as
they say,
Died but of late, and sent his cry to me,
To hear him speak before he left his
life.

360

Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay
the mage;
And when I enter'd told me that him-
self
And Merlin ever served about the king,
Uther, before he died; and on the
night
When Uther in Tintagil past away
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the
two
Left the still king, and passing forth
to breathe,



"A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet"

Then from the castle gateway by the
 chasm
 Descending thro' the dismal night—a
 night 370
 In which the bounds of heaven and
 earth were lost—
 Beheld, so high upon the dreary
 deeps
 It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape
 thereof
 A dragon wing'd, and all from stem
 to stern
 Bright with a shining people on the
 decks,
 And gone as soon as seen. And then
 the two
 Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the
 great sea fall,
 Wave after wave, each mightier than
 the last,
 Till last, a ninth one, gathering half
 the deep
 And full of voices, slowly rose and
 plunged 380
 Roaring, and all the wave was in a
 flame;
 And down the wave and in the flame
 was borne
 A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's
 feet,
 Who stoopt and caught the babe, and
 cried, "The King!
 Here is an heir for Uther!" And the
 fringe
 Of that great breaker, sweeping up
 the strand,
 Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the
 word,
 And all at once all round him rose in
 fire,
 So that the child and he were clothed
 in fire.
 And presently thereafter follow'd calm,
 Free sky and stars. "And this same
 child," he said, 391
 "Is he who reigns; nor could I part
 in peace
 Till this were told." And saying this
 the seer
 Went thro' the strait and dreadful
 pass of death,
 Not ever to be question'd any more
 Save on the further side; but when I
 met
 Merlin, and ask'd him if these things
 were truth—

The shining dragon and the naked
 child
 Descending in the glory of the seas—
 He laugh'd as is his wont, and an-
 swer'd me 400
 In riddling triplets of old time, and
 said:—

"Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in the
 sky!

A young man will be wiser by and by;
 An old man's wit may wander ere he die.

"Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the
 sea!

And truth is this to me, and that to thee;
 And truth or clothed or naked let it be.

"Rain, sun, and rain! and the free
 blossom blows;

Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he who
 knows?
 From the great deep to the great deep he
 goes." 410

'So Merlin riddling anger'd me;
 but thou

Fear not to give this King thine only
 child,

Guinevere; so great bards of him will
 sing

Hereafter, and dark sayings from of old
 Ranging and ringing thro' the minds
 of men,

And echo'd by old folk beside their
 fires

For comfort after their wage-work is
 done,

Speak of the King; and Merlin in our
 time

Hath spoken also, not in jest, and
 sworn

Tho' men may wound him that he
 will not die, 420

But pass, again to come, and then or
 now

Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,
 Till these and all men hail him for
 their king.'

She spake and King Leodogran re-
 joiced,

But musing 'Shall I answer yea or
 nay?

Doubted, and drowsed, nodded and
 slept, and saw,

Dreaming, a slope of land that ever
 grew,

Field after field, up to a height, the
 peak
 Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom
 king,
 Now looming, and now lost; and on
 the slope ⁴³⁰
 The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd
 was driven,
 Fire glimpsed; and all the land from
 roof and rick,
 In drifts of smoke before a rolling
 wind,
 Stream'd to the peak, and mingled
 with the haze
 And made it thicker; while the phan-
 tom king
 Sent out at times a voice; and here or
 there
 Stood one who pointed toward the
 voice, the rest
 Slew on and burnt, crying, 'No king
 of ours,
 No son of Uther, and no king of ours;'
 Till with a wink his dream was
 changed, the haze ⁴⁴⁰
 Descended, and the solid earth be-
 came
 As nothing, but the King stood out in
 heaven,
 Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and
 sent
 Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
 Back to the court of Arthur answer-
 ing yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior
 whom he loved
 And honor'd most, Sir Lancelot, to
 ride forth
 And bring the Queen, and watch'd
 him from the gates;
 And Lancelot past away among the
 flowers—
 For then was latter April—and re-
 turn'd ⁴⁵⁰
 Among the flowers, in May, with
 Guinevere.
 To whom arrived, by Dubric the high
 saint,
 Chief of the church in Britain, and
 before
 The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the
 King
 That morn was married, while in
 stainless white,
 The fair beginners of a nobler time,

And glorying in their vows and him,
 his knights
 Stood round him, and rejoicing in his
 joy.
 Far shone the fields of May thro' open
 door,
 The sacred altar blossom'd white with
 May, ⁴⁶⁰
 The sun of May descended on their
 King,
 They gazed on all earth's beauty in
 their Queen,
 Roll'd incense, and there past along
 the hymns
 A voice as of the waters, while the two
 Sware at the shrine of Christ a death-
 less love.
 And Arthur said, 'Behold, thy doom
 is mine.
 Let chance what will, I love thee to
 the death!'
 To whom the Queen replied with
 drooping eyes,
 'King and my lord, I love thee to the
 death!'
 And holy Dubric spread his hands
 and spake: ⁴⁷⁰
 'Reign ye, and live and love, and
 make the world
 Other, and may thy Queen be one
 with thee,
 And all this Order of thy Table Round
 Fulfil the boundless purpose of their
 King!'

So Dubric said; but when they left
 the shrine
 Great lords from Rome before the
 portal stood,
 In scornful stillness gazing as they
 past;
 Then while they paced a city all on
 fire
 With sun and cloth of gold, the trum-
 pets blew,
 And Arthur's knighthood sang before
 the King:— ⁴⁸⁰

'Blow trumpet, for the world is white
 with May!
 Blow trumpet, the long night hath roll'd
 away!
 Blow thro' the living world—"Let the
 King reign!"

'Shall Rome or Heathen rule in Arthur's
 realm?

Flash brand and lance, fall battle-axe upon
helm,
Fall battle-axe, and flash brand! Let the
King reign!

'Strike for the King and live! his knights
have heard
That God hath told the King a secret
word.
Fall battle-axe, and flash brand! Let the
King reign!

Blow trumpet! he will lift us from the
dust.
Blow trumpet! live the strength, and die the
lust!
Clang battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the
King reign!

'Strike for the King and die! and if thou
diest,
The King is king, and ever wills the high-
est.
Clang battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the
King reign!

'Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his
May!
Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by
day!
Clang battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the
King reign!

'The King will follow Christ, and we the
King,
In whom high God hath breathed a secret
thing.
Fall battle-axe, and clash brand! Let the
King reign!'

So sang the knighthood, moving to
their hall.

There at the banquet those great lords
from Rome,

The slowly-fading mistress of the
world,

Strode in and claim'd their tribute as
of yore.

But Arthur spake: 'Behold, for these
have sworn

To wage my wars, and worship me
their King;

The old order changeth, yielding place
to new,

And we that fight for our fair father
Christ,

Seeing that ye be grown too weak and
old

To drive the heathen from your Roman
wall,

No tribute will we pay.' So those
great lords

Drew back in wrath, and Arthur strove
with Rome.

And Arthur and his knighthood for
a space

Were all one will, and thro' that
strength the King

Drew in the petty principdoms under
him,

Fought, and in twelve great battles
overcame

The heathen hordes, and made a realm
and reign'd.

THE ROUND TABLE

GARETH AND LYNETTE
THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT
GERAINT AND ENID
BALIN AND BALAN
MERLIN AND VIVIEN

LANCELOT AND ELAINE
THE HOLY GRAIL
PELLEAS AND ETARRE
THE LAST TOURNAMENT
GUINEVERE

GARETH AND LYNETTE

The last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful
spring

Stared at the spate. A slender-shafted
pine

Lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd
away.

How he went down,' said Gareth, 'as
a false knight

Or evil king before my lance, if
lance

Were mine to use — O senseless cata-
ract,

Bearing all down in thy precipitancy —
And yet thou art but swollen with cold
snows

And mine is living blood. Thou dost
His will,

The Maker's, and not knowest, and I
that know,

Have strength and wit, in my good
 mother's hall
 Linger with vacillating obedience,
 Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and
 whistled to—
 Since the good mother holds me still
 a child!
 Good mother is bad mother unto
 me!
 A worse were better; yet no worse
 would I.
 Heaven yield her for it, but in me put
 force
 To weary her ears with one continuous
 prayer,
 Until she let me fly discharg'd to
 sweep
 In ever-highering eagle-circles up 21
 To the great Sun of Glory, and thence
 swoop
 Down upon all things base, and dash
 them dead,
 A knight of Arthur, working out his
 will,
 To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain,
 when he came
 With Modred hither in the summer-
 time,
 Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven
 knight.
 Modred for want of worthier was the
 judge.
 Then I so shook him in the saddle, he
 said,
 "Thou hast half prevail'd against me,"
 said so—he— 30
 Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was
 mute,
 For he is alway sullen—what care I?

And Gareth went, and hovering
 round her chair
 Ask'd, 'Mother, tho' ye count me still
 the child,
 Sweet mother, do ye love the child?'
 She laugh'd,
 'Thou art but a wild-goose to question
 it.'
 'Then, mother, an ye love the child,'
 he said,
 'Being a goose and rather tame than
 wild,
 Hear the child's story.' 'Yea, my well-
 beloved,
 An 't were but of the goose and golden
 eggs.' 40

And Gareth answer'd her with kin-
 dling eyes:
 'Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg
 of mine
 Was finer gold than any goose can
 lay;
 For this an eagle, a royal eagle, laid
 Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a
 palm
 As glitters gilded in thy Book of
 Hours.
 And there was ever haunting round
 the palm
 A lusty youth, but poor, who often
 saw
 The splendor sparkling from aloft,
 and thought,
 "An I could climb and lay my hand
 upon it, 50
 Then were I wealthier than a leash of
 kings."
 But ever when he reach'd a hand to
 climb,
 One that had loved him from his child-
 hood caught
 And stay'd him, "Climb not lest thou
 break thy neck,
 I charge thee by my love," and so the
 boy,
 Sweet mother, neither clomb nor brake
 his neck,
 But brake his very heart in pining for
 it,
 And past away.'

To whom the mother said,
 'True love, sweet son, had risk'd him-
 self and climb'd,
 And handed down the golden treasure
 to him.' 60

And Gareth answer'd her with kin-
 dling eyes:
 'Gold? said I gold?—ay then, why
 he, or she,
 Or whosoe'er it was, or half the world
 Had ventured—*had* the thing I spake
 of been
 Mere gold—but this was all of that
 true steel
 Whereof they forged the brand Excali-
 bur,
 And lightnings play'd about it in the
 storm,
 And all the little fowl were flurried at
 it,

And there were cries and clashings in
the nest,
That sent him from his senses. Let
me go.' 70

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself and
said :
' Hast thou no pity upon my loneli-
ness ?

Lo, where thy father Lot beside the
hearth

Lies like a log, and all but smoulder'd
out !

For ever when traitor to the King
He fought against him in the barons'
war,

And Arthur gave him back his terri-
tory,

His age hath slowly droopt, and now
lies there

A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburi-
able,

No more ; nor sees, nor hears, nor
speaks, nor knows. 80

And both thy brethren are in Arthur's
hall,

Albeit neither loved with that full
love

I feel for thee, nor worthy such a love.
Stay therefore thou ; red berries charm
the bird,

And thee, mine innocent, the jousts,
the wars,

Who never knewest finger-ache, nor
pang

Of wrench'd or broken limb—an often
chance

In those brain-stunning shocks, and
tourney-falls,

Frights to my heart. But stay ; follow
the deer

By these tall firs and our fast-falling
burns ; 90

So make thy manhood mightier day
by day.

Sweet is the chase ; and I will seek
thee out

Some comfortable bride and fair, to
grace

Thy climbing life, and cherish my
prone year,

Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness
I know not thee, myself, nor anything.

Stay, my best son ! ye are yet more
boy than man.

Then Gareth : ' An ye hold me yet
for child,

Hear yet once more the story of the
child.

For, mother, there was once a king,
like ours. 100

The prince his heir, when tall and
marriageable,

Ask'd for a bride ; and thereupon the
king

Set two before him. One was fair,
strong, arm'd —

But to be won by force—and many
men

Desired her ; one, good luck, no man
desired.

And these were the conditions of the
king :

That save he won the first by force,
he needs

Must wed that other, whom no man
desired,

A red-faced bride who knew herself so
vile

That evermore she long'd to hide her-
self, 110

Nor fronted man or woman, eye to
eye —

Yea—some she cleaved to, but they
died of her.

And one—they call'd her Fame ; and
one—O mother,

How can ye keep me tether'd to you ?
— Shame.

Man am I grown, a man's work must
I do.

Follow the deer ? follow the Christ,
the King,

Live pure, speak true, right wrong,
follow the King —

Else, wherefore born ?'

To whom the mother said :
' Sweet son, for there be many who
deem him not,

Or will not deem him, wholly proven
king— 120

Albeit in mine own heart I knew him
King

When I was frequent with him in my
youth,

And heard him kingly speak, and
doubted him

No more than he, himself ; but felt
him mine,

Of closest kin to me. Yet — wilt thou
leave
Thine easeful biding here, and risk
thine all,
Life, limbs, for one that is not proven
king?
Stay, till the cloud that settles round
his birth
Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet
son.'

And Gareth answer'd quickly: 'Not
an hour,
So that ye yield me — I will walk thro'
fire,
Mother, to gain it — your full leave to
go.
Not proven, who swept the dust of
ruin'd Rome
From off the threshold of the realm,
and crush'd
The idolaters, and made the people
free?
Who should be king save him who
makes us free?'

So when the Queen, who long had
sought in vain
To break him from the intent to which
he grew,
Found her son's will unwaveringly
one,
She answer'd craftily: 'Will ye walk
thro' fire?
Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed
the smoke,
Ay, go then, an ye must; only one
proof,
Before thou ask the King to make
thee knight,
Of thine obedience and thy love to me,
Thy mother, — I demand.'

And Gareth cried:
'A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.
Nay — quick! the proof to prove me
to the quick!'

But slowly spake the mother looking
at him:
'Prince, thou shalt go disguised to
Arthur's hall,
And hire thyself to serve for meats
and drinks
Among the scullions and the kitchen-
knaves,

And those that hand the dish across
the bar.
Nor shalt thou tell thy name to any
one.
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth
and a day.'

For so the Queen believed that when
her son
Beheld his only way to glory lead
Low down thro' villain kitchen-vassal
age,
Her own true Gareth was too princely-
proud
To pass thereby; so should he rest
with her,
Closed in her castle from the sound of
arms.

Silent awhile was Gareth, then re-
plied:
'The thrall in person may be free in
soul,
And I shall see the jousts. Thy son
am I,
And, since thou art my mother, must
obey.
I therefore yield me freely to thy will;
For hence will I, disguised, and hire
myself
To serve with scullions and with
kitchen-knives;
Nor tell my name to any — no, not the
King.'

Gareth awhile linger'd. The mo-
ther's eye
Full of the wistful fear that he would
go,
And turning toward him wheresoe'er
he turn'd,
Perplex'd his outward purpose, till an
hour
When, waken'd by the wind which
with full voice
Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on
to dawn,
He rose, and out of slumber calling
two
That still had tended on him from his
birth,
Before the wakeful mother heard him,
went.

The three were clad like tillers of
the soil.

Southward they set their faces. The
birds made
Melody on branch and melody in mid
air. 180
The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd
into green,
And the live green had kindied into
flowers,
For it was past the time of Easter-day.

So, when their feet were planted on
the plain
That broaden'd toward the base of
Camelot,
Far off they saw the silver-misty
morn
Rolling her smoke about the royal
mount,
That rose between the forest and the
field.
At times the summit of the high city
flash'd;
At times the spires and turrets half-
way down 190
Prick'd thro' the mist; at times the
great gate shone
Only, that open'd on the field below;
Anon, the whole fair city had disap-
pear'd.

Then those who went with Gareth
were amazed,
One crying, 'Let us go no further,
lord;
Here is a city of enchanters, built
By fairy kings.' The second echo'd
him,
'Lord, we have heard from our wise
man at home
To northward, that this king is not
the King,
But only changeling out of Fairyland,
Who drave the heathen hence by sor-
cery 201
And Merlin's glamour.' Then the first
again,
'Lord, there is no such city anywhere,
But all a vision.'

Gareth answer'd them
With laughter, swearing he had gla-
mour enow
In his own blood, his princedom,
youth, and hopes,
To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian
sea; .

So push'd them all unwilling toward
the gate.
And there was no gate like it under
heaven.
For barefoot on the keystone, which
was lined 210
And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,
The Lady of the Lake stood; all her
dress
Wept from her sides as water flowing
away;
But like the cross her great and goodly
arms
Stretch'd under all the cornice and up-
held.
And drops of water fell from either
hand;
And down from one a sword was
hung, from one
A censer, either worn with wind and
storm;
And o'er her breast floated the sacred
fish;
And in the space to left of her, and
right, 220
Were Arthur's wars in weird devices
done,
New things and old co-twisted, as if
Time
Were nothing, so inveterately that
men
Were giddy gazing there; and over
all
High on the top were those three
queens, the friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at
his need.

Then those with Gareth for so long
a space
Stared at the figures that at last it
seem'd
The dragon-boughts and elvish em-
blemings
Began to move, seethe, twine, and
curl. They call'd 230
To Gareth, 'Lord, the gateway is
alive.'

And Gareth likewise on them fixt
his eyes
So long that even to him they seem'd
to move.
Out of the city a blast of music peal'd.
Back from the gate started the three,
to whom

From out thereunder came an ancient
man,
Long-bearded, saying, 'Who be ye,
my sons?'

Then Gareth: 'We be tillers of the
soil,
Who leaving share in furrow come to
see
The glories of our King; but these,
my men, — ²⁴⁰
Your city moved so weirdly in the
mist —
Doubt if the King be king at all, or
come
From Fairyland; and whether this be
built
By magie, and by fairy kings and
queens;
Or whether there be any city at all,
Or all a vision; and this music now
Hath scared them both, but tell thou
these the truth.'

Then that old Seer made answer,
playing on him
And saying: 'Son, I have seen the
good ship sail
Keel upward, and mast downward,
in the heavens, ²⁵⁰
And solid turrets topsy-turvy in air;
And here is truth, but an it please
thee not,
Take thou the truth as thou hast told
it me.
For truly, as thou sayest, a fairy king
And fairy queens have built the city,
son;
They came from out a sacred moun-
tain-cleft
Toward the sunrise, each with harp in
hand,
And built it to the music of their
harps.
And, as thou sayest, it is enchanted,
son,
For there is nothing in it as it seems
Saving the King; tho' some there be
that hold ²⁶¹
The King a shadow, and the city real.
Yet take thou heed of him, for, so
thou pass
Beneath this archway, then wilt thou
become
A thrall to his enchantments, for the
King

Will bind thee by such vows as is a
shame
A man should not be bound by, yet
the which
No man can keep; but, so thou dread
to swear,
Pass not beneath this gateway, but
abide
Without, among the cattle of the
field. ²⁷⁰
For an ye heard a music, like enow
They are building still, seeing the city
is built
To music, therefore never built at
all,
And therefore built for ever.'

Gareth spake
Anger'd: 'Old master, reverence
thine own beard
That looks as white as utter truth,
and seems
Wellnigh as long as thou art statured
tall!
Why mockest thou the stranger that
hath been
To thee fair-spoken?'

But the Seer replied:
'Know ye not then the Riddling of
the Bards: ²⁸⁰
"Confusion, and illusion, and relation,
Elusion, and occasion, and evasion"?
I mock thee not but as thou mockest
me,
And all that see thee, for thou art not
who
Thou seemest, but I know thee who
thou art.
And now thou goest up to mock the
King.
Who cannot brook the shadow of any
lie.'

Unmockingly the mocker ending
here
Turn'd to the right, and past along
the plain;
Whom Gareth looking after said:
'My men, ²⁹⁰
Our one white lie sits like a little ghost
Here on the threshold of our enter-
prise.
Let love be blamed for it, not she,
nor I.
Well, we will make amends.'

With all good cheer
 He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd
 with his twain
 Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces
 And stately, rich in emblem and the
 work
 Of ancient kings who did their days
 in stone;
 Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at
 Arthur's court,
 Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and
 everywhere,
 At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with les-
 sening peak
 And pinnacle, and had made it spire
 to heaven.
 And ever and anon a knight would
 pass
 Outward, or inward to the hall; his
 arms
 Clash'd, and the sound was good to
 Gareth's ear.
 And out of bower and casement shyly
 glanced
 Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars
 of love;
 And all about a healthful people stept
 As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending
 heard
 A voice, the voice of Arthur, and be-
 held
 Far over heads in that long-vaulted
 hall
 The splendor of the presence of the
 King
 Throned, and delivering doom — and
 look'd no more —
 But felt his young heart hammering
 in his ears,
 And thought, 'For this half-shadow
 of a lie
 The truthful King will doom me
 when I speak.'
 Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find
 Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor
 one
 Nor other, but in all the listening
 eyes
 Of those tall knights that ranged
 about the throne
 Clear honor shining like the dewy star
 Of dawn, and faith in their great
 King, with pure
 Affection, and the light of victory,

And glory gain'd, and evermore to gain.

Then came a widow crying to the
 King:
 'A boon, Sir King! Thy father,
 Uther, reft
 From my dead lord a field with vio-
 lence;
 For howsoe'er at first he proffer'd
 gold,
 Yet, for the field was pleasant in our
 eyes,
 We yielded not; and then he reft us
 of it
 Perforce and left us neither gold nor
 field.'

Said Arthur, 'Whether would ye?
 gold or field?'
 To whom the woman weeping, 'Nay,
 my lord,
 The field was pleasant in my hus-
 band's eye.'

And Arthur: 'Have thy pleasant
 field again,
 And thrice the gold for Uther's use
 thereof,
 According to the years. No boon is
 here,
 But justice, so thy say be proven
 true.
 Accursed, who from the wrongs his
 father did
 Would shape himself a right!'

And while she past,
 Came yet another widow crying to
 him:
 'A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy,
 King, am I.
 With thine own hand thou slewest
 my dear lord,
 A knight of Uther in the barons'
 war,
 When Lot and many another rose and
 fought
 Against thee, saying thou wert basely
 born.
 I held with these, and loathe to ask
 thee aught.
 Yet lo! my husband's brother had my
 son
 Thrall'd in his castle, and hath starved
 him dead.

And standeth seized of that inheritance
Which thou that slewest the sire hast
left the son.
So, tho' I scarce can ask it thee for
hate,
Grant me some knight to do the battle
for me,
Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for
my son.'

Then strode a good knight forward,
crying to him,
'A boon, Sir King! I am her kins-
man, I.
Give me to right her wrong, and slay
the man.'

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal,
and cried,
'A boon, Sir King! even that thou
grant her none,
This railer, that bath mock'd thee in
full hall —
None; or the wholesome boon of gyve
and gag.'

But Arthur: 'We sit King, to help
the wrong'd
Thro' all our realm. The woman
loves her lord.
Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves
and hates!
The kings of old had doom'd thee to
the flames;
Aurelius Emrys would have scourged
thee dead,
And Uther slit thy tongue; but get
thee hence —
Lest that rough humor of the kings of
old
Return upon me! Thou that art her
kin,
Go likewise; lay him low and slay
him not,
But bring him here, that I may judge
the right,
According to the justice of the King.
Then, be he guilty, by that deathless
King
Who lived and died for men, the man
shall die.'

Then came in hall the messenger of
Mark,
A name of evil savor in the land,

The Cornish king. In either hand he
bore
What dazzled all, and shone far-off as
shines
A field of charlock in the sudden
sun
Between two showers, a cloth of
palest gold,
Which down he laid before the throne,
and knelt,
Delivering that his lord, the vassal
king,
Was even upon his way to Camelot;
For having heard that Arthur of his
grace
Had made his goodly cousin Tristram
knight,
And, for himself was of the greater
state,
Being a king, he trusted his liege-
lord
Would yield him this large honor all
the more;
So pray'd him well to accept this cloth
of gold,
In token of true heart and fealty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth,
to rend
In pieces, and so cast it on the hearth.
An oak-tree smoulder'd there. 'The
goodly knight!
What! shall the shield of Mark stand
among these?'
For, midway down the side of that
long hall,
A stately pile, — whereof along the
front,
Some blazon'd, some but carven, and
some blank,
There ran a treble range of stony
shields, —
Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd the
hearth.
And under every shield a knight was
named.
For this was Arthur's custom in his
hall:
When some good knight had done one
noble deed,
His arms were carven only; but if
twain,
His arms were blazon'd also; but if
none,
The shield was blank and bare, with
out a sign

Saving the name beneath. And
 Gareth saw
 The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich and
 bright,
 And Modred's blank as death; and
 Arthur cried
 To rend the cloth and cast it on the
 hearth. 410

'Fore like are we to reave him of
 his crown
 Than make him knight because men
 call him king.
 The kings we found, ye know we
 stay'd their hands
 From war among themselves, but left
 them kings;
 Of whom were any bounteous, merciful,
 Truth-speaking, brave, good livers,
 them we enroll'd
 Among us, and they sit within our hall.
 But Mark hath tarnish'd the great
 name of king,
 As Mark would sully the low state of
 churl;
 And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of
 gold, 420
 Return, and meet, and hold him from
 our eyes,
 Lest we should lap him up in cloth of
 lead,
 Silenced for ever — craven — a man of
 plots,
 Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside
 ambushings —
 No fault of thine; let Kay the seneschal

Look to thy wants, and send thee satisfied —
 Accursed, who strikes nor lets the
 hand be seen!

And many another suppliant crying
 came
 With noise of ravage wrought by
 beast and man,
 And evermore a knight would ride
 away. 430

Last, Gareth leaning both hands
 heavily
 Down on the shoulders of the twain,
 his men,
 Approach'd between them toward the
 King, and ask'd,

'A boon, Sir King,' — his voice was
 all ashamed, —
 'For see ye not how weak and hunger-
 worn
 I seem — leaning on these? grant me
 to serve
 For meat and drink among thy kitchen-
 knaves
 A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek
 my name.
 Hereafter I will fight.'

To him the King :
 'A goodly youth and worth a good-
 lier boon ! 440
 But so thou wilt no goodlier, then must
 Kay,
 The master of the meats and drinks, be
 thine.'

He rose and past; then Kay, a man
 of mien
 Wan-sallow as the plant that feels
 itself
 Root-bitten by white lichen :

'Lo ye now !
 This fellow hath broken from some
 abbey, where,
 God wot, he had not beef and brewis
 enow,
 However that might chance ! but an
 he work,
 Like any pigeon will I cram his
 crop,
 And sleeker shall he shine than any
 hog.' 450

Then Lancelot standing near : 'Sir
 Seneschal,
 Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray,
 and all the hounds;
 A horse thou knowest, a man thou
 dost not know.
 Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair and
 fine,
 High nose, a nostril large and fine, and
 hands
 Large, fair, and fine ! — Some young
 lad's mystery —
 But, or from sheepcot or king's hall,
 the boy
 Is noble-natured. Treat him with all
 grace,
 Lest he should come to shame thy
 judging of him.'

Then Kay : 'What murmurest thou
of mystery ?⁴⁶⁰
Think ye this fellow will poison the
King's dish ?
Nay, for he spake too fool-like — mys-
tery !
Tut, an the lad were noble, he had
ask'd
For horse and armor. Fair and fine,
forsooth !
Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands ? but see
thou to it
That thine own fineness, Lancelot,
some fine day
Undo thee not — and leave my man to
me.'

So Gareth all for glory underwent
The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage,
Ate with young lads his portion by the
door,⁴⁷⁰
And couch'd at night with grimy
kitchen-knives.
And Lancelot ever spake him plea-
santly,
But Kay the seneschal, who loved him
not,
Would hustle and harry him, and
labor him
Beyond his comrade of the hearth,
and set
To turn the broach, draw water, or
hew wood,
Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bow'd
himself
With all obedience to the King, and
wrought
All kind of service with a noble ease
That graced the lowliest act in doing
it.⁴⁸⁰
And when the thralls had talk among
themselves,
And one would praise the love that
linkt the King
And Lancelot — how the King had
saved his life
In battle twice, and Lancelot once the
King's —
For Lancelot was first in the tourna-
ment,
But Arthur mightiest on the battle-
field —
Gareth was glad. Or if some other
told
How once the wandering forester at
dawn,

Far over the blue tarns and hazy seas,
On Caer-Eryri's highest found the
King,⁴⁹⁰
A naked babe, of whom the Prophet
spake,
'He passes to the Isle Avilion,
He passes and is heal'd and cannot
die' —
Gareth was glad. But if their talk
were foul,
Then would he whistle rapid as any
lark,
Or carol some old roundelay, and so
loud
That first they mock'd, but, after,
reverenced him.
Or Gareth, telling some prodigious
tale
Of knights who sliced a red life-bub-
bling way
Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon,
held⁵⁰⁰
All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good
mates
Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,
Charm'd; till Sir Kay, the seneschal,
would come
Blustering upon them, like a sudden
wind
Among dead leaves, and drive them
all apart.
Or when the thralls had sport among
themselves,
So there were any trial of mastery,
He, by two yards in casting bar or
stone,
Was counted best; and if there chanced
a joust,
So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to
go,⁵¹⁰
Would hurry thither, and when he
saw the knights
Clash like the coming and retiring
wave,
And the spear spring, and good horse
reel, the boy
Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among
the thralls;
But in the weeks that follow'd, the
good Queen,
Repentant of the word she made him
swear,
And saddening in her childless castle,
sent,

Between the in-crescent and de-cres-
cent moon,
Arms for her son, and loosed him
from his vow. 520

This, Gareth hearing from a squire
of Lot
With whom he used to play at tour-
ney once,
When both were children, and in
lonely haunts
Would scratch a ragged oval on the
sand,
And each at either dash from either
end—
Shame never made girl redder than
Gareth joy.
He laugh'd, he sprang. 'Out of the
smoke, at once
I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's
knee—
These news be mine, none other's—
nay, the King's—
Descend into the city;' whereon he
sought 530
The King alone, and found, and told
him all.

'I have stagger'd thy strong Gawain
in a tilt
For pastime; yea, he said it; joust
can I.
Make me thy knight—in secret! let
my name
Be hidden, and give me the first
quest, I spring
Like flame from ashes.'

Here the King's calm eye
Fell on, and check'd, and made him
flush, and bow
Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd
him:
'Son, the good mother let me know
thee here,
And sent her wish that I would yield
thee thine. 540
Make thee my knight? my knights
are sworn to vows
Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
And, loving, utter faithfulness in
love,
And uttermost obedience to the King.'

Then Gareth, lightly springing from
his knees:

'My King, for hardihood I can pro-
mise thee.
For uttermost obedience make demand
Of whom ye gave me to, the Senes-
chal,
No mellow master of the meats and
drinks!
And as for love, God wot, I love not
yet, 550
But love I shall, God willing.'

And the King:
'Make thee my knight in secret? yea,
but he,
Our noblest brother, and our truest
man,
And one with me in all, he needs must
know.'

'Let Lancelot know, my King, let
Lancelot know,
Thy noblest and thy truest!'

And the King:
'But wherefore would ye men should
wonder at you?
Nay, rather for the sake of me, their
King,
And the deed's sake my knighthood
do the deed,
Than to be noised of.'

Merrily Gareth ask'd:
'Have I not earn'd my cake in baking
of it? 561
Let be my name until I make my
name!
My deeds will speak; it is but for a
day.'
So with a kindly hand on Gareth's arm
Smiled the great King, and half-un-
willingly
Loving his lusty youthhood yielded
to him.
Then, after summoning Lancelot pri-
vily:
'I have given him the first quest; he
is not proven.
Look therefore, when he calls for this
in hall,
Thou get to horse and follow him far
away. 570
Cover the lions on thy shield, and
see,
Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en
nor slain.'

Then that same day there past into
the hall
A damsel of high lineage, and a
brow
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-
blossom,
Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender
nose
Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower.
She into hall past with her page and
cried:

'O King, for thou hast driven the
foe without,
See to the foe within! bridge, ford,
beset 580
By bandits, every one that owns a
tower
The lord for half a league. Why sit
ye there?
Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were
king,
Till even the lonest hold were all as
free
From cursed bloodshed as thine altar-
cloth
From that best blood it is a sin to
spill.'

'Comfort thyself,' said Arthur, 'I
nor mine
Rest; so my knighthood keep the
vows they swore,
The wastest moorland of our realm
shall be
Safe, damsel, as the centre of this
hall. 590
What is thy name? thy need?'

'My name?' she said —
'Lynette, my name; noble; my need,
a knight
To combat for my sister, Lyonors,
A lady of high lineage, of great lands,
And comely, yea, and comelier than
myself.
She lives in Castle Perilous. A river
Runs in three loops about her living-
place;
And o'er it are three passings, and
three knights
Defend the passings, brethren, and a
fourth,
And of that four the mightiest, holds
her stay'd 600
In her own castle, and so besieges her

To break her will, and make her wed
with him;
And but delays his purport till thou
send
To do the battle with him thy chief
man
Sir Lancelot, whom he trusts to over-
throw,
Then wed, with glory; but she will
not wed
Save whom she loveth, or a holy
life.
Now therefore have I come for Lan-
celot.'

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth
ask'd:
'Damsel, ye know this Order lives to
crush 610
All wrongers of the realm. But say,
these four,
Who be they? What the fashion of
the men?'

'They be of foolish fashion, O Sir
King,
The fashion of that old knight-errantry
Who ride abroad, and do but what
they will;
Courteous or bestial from the moment,
such
As have nor law nor king; and three
of these
Proud in their fantasy call themselves
the Day,
Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and
Evening-Star,
Being strong fools; and never a whit
more wise 620
The fourth, who alway rideth arm'd in
black,
A huge man-beast of boundless sav-
agery.
He names himself the Night and oft-
ener Death,
And wears a helmet mounted with a
skull,
And bears a skeleton figured on his
arms,
To show that who may slay or scape
the three,
Slain by himself, shall enter endless
night.
And all these four be fools, but mighty
men,
And therefore am I come for Lancelot.'

Hereat Sir Gareth call'd from where
 he rose, 630
 A head with kindling eyes above the
 throng,
 'A boon, Sir King—this quest!' 635
 then—for he mark'd
 Kay near him groaning like a wounded
 bull—
 'Yea, King, thou knowest thy
 kitchen-knave am I,
 And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks
 am I,
 And I can topple over a hundred such.
 Thy promise, King,' and Arthur glanc-
 ing at him,
 Brought down a momentary brow.
 'Rough, sudden,
 And pardonable, worthy to be
 knight—
 Go therefore,' and all hearers were
 amazed. 640

But on the damsel's forehead shame,
 pride, wrath
 Slew the may-white. She lifted either
 arm,
 'Fie on thee, King! I ask'd for thy
 chief knight,
 And thou hast given me but a kitchen-
 knave.'
 Then ere a man in hall could stay her,
 turn'd,
 Fled down the lane of access to the
 King,
 Took horse, descended the slope street,
 and past
 The weird white gate, and paused
 without, beside
 The field of tourney, murmuring
 'kitchen-knave!'

Now two great entries open'd from
 the hall, 650
 At one end one that gave upon a range
 Of level pavement where the King
 would pace
 At sunrise, gazing over plain and
 wood;
 And down from this a lordly stairway
 sloped
 Till lost in blowing trees and tops of
 towers;
 And out by this main doorway past
 the King.
 But one was counter to the hearth, and
 rose

High that the highest-crested helm
 could ride
 Therethro' nor graze; and by this
 entry fled
 The damsel in her wrath, and on to
 this 660
 Sir Gareth strode, and saw without
 the door
 King Arthur's gift, the worth of half
 a town,
 A war-horse of the best, and near it
 stood
 The two that out of north had follow'd
 him.
 This bare a maiden shield, a casque;
 that held
 The horse, the spear; whereat Sir
 Gareth loosed
 A cloak that dropt from collar-bone to
 heel,
 A cloth of roughest web, and cast it
 down,
 And from it, like a fuel-smother'd
 fire
 That lookt half-dead, brake bright,
 and flash'd as those 670
 Dull-coated things, that making slide
 apart
 Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath
 there burn
 A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and
 fly.
 So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in
 arms.
 Then as he donn'd the helm, and took
 the shield
 And mounted horse and graspt a spear,
 of grain
 Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site,
 and tipt
 With trenchant steel, around him
 slowly prest
 The people, while from out of kitchen
 came
 The thralls in throng, and seeing who
 had work'd 680
 Lustier than any, and whom they
 could but love,
 Mounted in arms, threw up their caps
 and cried,
 'God bless the King, and all his
 fellowship!'
 And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth
 rode
 Down the slope street, and past with-
 out the gate.

So Gareth past with joy ; but as the
cur
Pluckt from the cur he fights with, ere
his cause
Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being
named,
His owner, but remembers all, and
growls
Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the
door ⁶⁹⁰
Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he
used
To harry and hustle.

'Bound upon a quest
With horse and arms — the King hath
past his time —
My scullion knave ! Thralls, to your
work again,
For an your fire be low ye kindle mine !
Will there be dawn in West and eve
in East ?
Begone ! — my knave ! — belike and
like enow
Some old head-blow not heeded in his
youth
So shook his wits they wander in his
prime —
Crazed ! How the villain lifted up his
voice, ⁷⁰⁰
Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-
knave !
Tut, he was tame and meek enow with
me,
Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's
noticing.
Well — I will after my loud knave,
and learn
Whether he know me for his master
yet.
Out of the smoke he came, and so my
lance
Hold, by God's grace, he shall into the
mire —
Thence, if the King awaken from his
craze,
Into the smoke again.'

But Lancelot said :
'Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against
the King, ⁷¹⁰
For that did never he whereon ye rail,
But ever meekly served the King in
thee ?
Abide ; take counsel, for this lad is
great

And lusty, and knowing both of lance
and sword.'
'Tut, tell not me,' said Kay, 'ye are
overfine
To mar stout knaves with foolish
courtesies ;'
Then mounted, on thro' silent faces
rode
Down the slope city, and out beyond
the gate.

But by the field of tourney lingering
yet
Mutter'd the damsel : 'Wherefore did
the King ⁷²⁰
Scorn me ? for, were Sir Lancelot
lackt, at least
He might have yielded to me one of
those
Who tilt for lady's love and glory here,
Rather than — O sweet heaven ! O, fie
upon him ! —
His kitchen-knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth drew —
And there were none but few goodlier
than he —
Shining in arms, 'Damsel, the quest is
mine.
Lead, and I follow.' She thereat, as
one
That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the
holt,
And deems it carrion of some wood-
land thing, ⁷³⁰
Or shrew or weasel, nipt her slender
nose
With petulant thumb and finger, shrill-
ing, 'Hence !
Avoid, thou smelliest all of kitchen-
grease.
And look who comes behind ;' for there
was Kay.
'Knowest thou not me ? thy master ?
I am Kay.
We lack thee by the hearth.'

And Gareth to him,
'Master no more ! too well I know
thee, ay —
The most ungente knight in Arthur's
hall.'
'Have at thee then,' said Kay ; they
shock'd, and Kay
Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried
again, ⁷⁴⁰

'Lead, and I follow,' and fast away
she fled.

But after sod and shingle ceased to
fly
Behind her, and the heart of her good
horse
Was nigh to burst with violence of the
beat,
Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken
spoke :

'What doest thou, scullion, in my
fellowship ?
Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught
the more
Or love thee better, that by some de-
vice
Full cowardly, or by mere unhappi-
ness,
Thou hast overthrown and slain thy
master — thou ! — 750
Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon !
— to me
Thou smell'st all of kitchen as before.'

'Damsel,' Sir Gareth answer'd
gently, 'say
Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye
say,
I leave not till I finish this fair
quest,
Or die therefore.'

'Ay, wilt thou finish it ?
Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he
talks !
The listening rogue hath caught the
manner of it.
But, knave, anon thou shalt be met
with, knave,
And then by such a one that thou for
all 760
The kitchen brewis that was ever
supt
Shalt not once dare to look him in the
face.'

'I shall assay,' said Gareth with a
smile
That madden'd her, and away she
flash'd again
Down the long avenues of a bound-
less wood ;
And Gareth following was again be-
knaved :

'Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss'd
the only way
Where Arthur's men are set along the
wood ;
The wood is nigh as full of thieves as
leaves.
If both be slain, I am rid of thee ; but
yet,
Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit
of thine ? 770
Fight, an thou canst ; I have miss'd
the only way.'

So till the dusk that follow'd even-
song
Rode on the two, reviler and reviled ;
Then after one long slope was
mounted, saw,
Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many thou-
sand pines
A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink
To westward — in the deeps whereof
a mere,
Round as the red eye of an eagle-owl,
Under the half-dead sunset glared ; and
shouts 780
Ascended, and there brake a serving-
man
Flying from out of the black wood,
and crying,
'They have bound my lord to cast him
in the mere.'
Then Gareth, 'Bound am I to right
the wrong'd,
But straitlier bound am I to bide with
thee.'
And when the damsel spake contemp-
tuously,
'Lead, and I follow,' Gareth cried
again,
'Follow, I lead !' so down among the
pines
He plunged ; and there, black-shad-
ow'd nigh the mere,
And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and
reed, 790
Saw six tall men haling a seventh
along,
A stone about his neck to drown him
in it.
Three with good blows he quieted,
but three
Fled thro' the pines ; and Gareth loosed
the stone
From off his neck, then in the mere
beside

Tumbled it; oilily bubbled up the mere.

Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free feet

Set him, a stalwart baron, Arthur's friend.

'Well that ye came, or else these caitiff rogues

Had wreak'd themselves on me; good cause is theirs ⁸⁰⁰

To hate me, for my wont hath ever been

To catch my thief, and then like vermin here

Drown him, and with a stone about his neck;

And under this wan water many of them

Lie rotting, but at night let go the stone,

And rise, and flickering in a grimly light

Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have saved a life

Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this wood.

And fain would I reward thee worshipfully.

What guerdon will ye ?'

Gareth sharply spake :

'None ! for the deed's sake have I done the deed, ⁸¹¹

In uttermost obedience to the King.

But wilt thou yield this damsel harborage ?'

Whereat the baron saying, 'I well believe

You be of Arthur's Table,' a light laugh

Broke from Lynette : 'Ay, truly of a truth,

And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen-knave ! —

But deem not I accept thee aught the more,

Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit

Down on a rout of craven foresters. A thresher with his flail had scatter'd

them. ⁸²¹

Nay — for thou smell'st of the kitchen

still.

But an this lord will yield us harborage,

Well.'

So she spake. A league beyond the wood,

All in a full-fair manor and a rich, His towers, where that day a feast had

been Held in high hall, and many a viand left,

And many a costly cate, received the three.

And there they placed a peacock in his pride ⁸²⁵

Before the damsel, and the baron set Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

'Meseems, that here is much discourtesy,

Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my side.

Hear me — this morn I stood in Arthur's hall,

And pray'd the King would grant me Lancelot

To fight the brotherhood of Day and Night —

The last a monster unsubduable Of any save of him for whom I call'd —

Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-knave,

"The quest is mine; thy kitchen-knave am I, ⁸⁴⁰

And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I."

Then Arthur all at once gone mad replies,

"Go therefore," and so gives the quest to him —

Him — here — a villain fitter to stick swine

Than ride abroad redressing women's wrong,

Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman.'

Then half-ashamed and part-amazed, the lord

Now look'd at one and now at other, left

The damsel by the peacock in his pride,

And, seating Gareth at another board, Sat down beside him, ate and then

began:

⁸⁵¹

'Friend, whether thou be kitchen-knave, or not,
Or whether it be the maiden's fantasy,
And whether she be mad, or else the King,
Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,
I ask not; but thou strikest a strong stroke,
For strong thou art and goodly therewithal,
And savor of my life; and therefore now,
For here be mighty men to joust with, weigh
Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel back ⁸⁶⁰
To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King.
Thy pardon; I but speak for thine avail,
The savor of my life.'

And Gareth said,
'Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,
Despite of Day and Night and Death and Hell.'

So when, next morn, the lord whose life he saved
Had, some brief space, convey'd them on their way
And left them with God-speed, Sir Gareth spake,
'Lead, and I follow.' Haughtily she replied:

'I fly no more; I allow thee for an hour. ⁸⁷⁰
Lion and stoat have isled together, knave,
In time of flood. Nay, furthermore, methinks
Some ruth is mine for thee. Back wilt thou, fool?
For hard by here is one will overthrow
And slay thee; then will I to court again,
And shame the King for only yielding me
My champion from the ashes of his hearth.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd courteously:

'Say thou thy say, and I will do my deed.
Allow me for mine hour, and thou wilt find ⁸⁸⁰
My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay
Among the ashes and wedded the King's son.'

Then to the shore of one of those long loops
Wherethro' the serpent river coil'd, they came.
Rough-thicketed were the banks and steep; the stream
Full, narrow; this a bridge of single arc
Took at a leap; and on the further side
Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold
In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily in hue,
Save that the dome was purple, and above, ⁸⁹⁰
Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.
And therefore the lawless warrior paced
Unarm'd, and calling, 'Damsel, is this he,
The champion thou hast brought from Arthur's hall,
For whom we let thee pass?' 'Nay, nay,' she said,
'Sir Morning-Star. The King in utter scorn
Of thee and thy much folly hath sent thee here
His kitchen-knave; and look thou to thyself.
See that he fall not on thee suddenly,
And slay thee unarm'd; he is not knight but knave.' ⁹⁰⁰

Then at his call, 'O daughters of the Dawn,
And servants of the Morning-Star, approach,
Arm me,' from out the silken curtain-folds
Bare-footed and bare-headed three fair girls
In gilt and rosy raiment came. Their feet
In dewy grasses glisten'd; and the hair
All over glanced with dewdrop or with gem

Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.
 These arm'd him in blue arms, and
 gave a shield
 Blue also, and thereon the morning
 star.⁹¹⁰
 And Gareth silent gazed upon the
 knight,
 Who stood a moment, ere his horse
 was brought,
 Glorying; and in the stream beneath
 him shone,
 Immingled with heaven's azure waver-
 ingly,
 The gay pavilion and the naked feet,
 His arms, the rosy raiment, and the
 star.

Then she that watch'd him: 'Where-
 fore stare ye so?
 Thou shakest in thy fear. There yet
 is time;
 Flee down the valley before he get to
 horse.
 Who will cry shame? Thou art not
 knight but knave.'⁹²⁰

Said Gareth: 'Damsel, whether
 knave or knight,
 Far liefer had I fight a score of times
 Than hear thee so missay me and
 revile.
 Fair words were best for him who
 fights for thee:
 But truly foul are better, for they
 send
 That strength of anger thro' mine
 arms, I know
 That I shall overthrow him.'

And he that bore
 The star, when mounted, cried from
 o'er the bridge:
 'A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn of
 me!
 Such fight not I, but answer scorn with
 scorn.'⁹³⁰
 For this were shame to do him further
 wrong
 Than set him on his feet, and take his
 horse
 And arms, and so return him to the
 King.
 Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly,
 knave.
 Avoid; for it beseemeth not a knave
 To ride with such a lady.'

'Dog, thou liest!
 I spring from loftier lineage than thine
 own.'
 He spake; and all at fiery speed the
 two
 Shock'd on the central bridge, and
 either spear
 Bent but not brake, and either knight
 at once,⁹⁴⁰
 Hurl'd as a stone from out of a cata-
 pult
 Beyond his horse's crupper and the
 bridge,
 Fell, as if dead; but quickly rose and
 drew,
 And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his
 brand
 He drave his enemy backward down
 the bridge,
 The damsel crying, 'Well-stricken,
 kitchen-knave!'
 Till Gareth's shield was cloven; but
 one stroke
 Laid him that clove it grovelling on
 the ground.

Then cried the fallen, 'Take not my
 life; I yield.'
 And Gareth, 'So this damsel ask it of
 me⁹⁵⁰
 Good—I accord it easily as a grace.'
 She reddening, 'Insolent scullion! I
 of thee?
 I bound to thee for any favor ask'd!
 'Then shall he die.' And Gareth there
 unlaced
 His helmet as to slay him, but she
 shriek'd,
 'Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay
 One nobler than thyself.' 'Damsel,
 thy charge
 Is an abounding pleasure to me.
 Knight,
 Thy life is thine at her command.
 Arise
 And quickly pass to Arthur's hall, and
 say⁹⁶⁰
 His kitchen-knave hath sent thee. See
 thou crave
 His pardon for thy breaking of his
 laws.
 Myself when I return will plead for
 thee.
 Thy shield is mine—farewell; and,
 damsel, thou,
 Lead, and I follow.'

And fast away she fled ;
 Then when he came upon her, spake :
 'Methought,
 Knave, when I watch'd thee striking
 on the bridge,
 The savor of thy kitchen came upon
 me
 A little faintlier ; but the wind hath
 changed,
 I scent it twenty-fold.' And then she
 sang,
 "'O morning star"—not that tall
 felon there
 Whom thou, by sorcery or unhappi-
 ness
 Or some device, hast foully over-
 thrown, —

"'O morning star that smilest in the blue,
 Ostar, my morning dream hath proven true,
 Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath smiled
 on me."

'But thou begone, take counsel, and
 away,
 For hard by here is one that guards a
 ford—
 The second brother in their fool's para-
 ble—
 Will pay thee all thy wages, and to
 boot.
 Care not for shame ; thou art not
 knight but knave.'

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd,
 laughingly:
 'Parables? Hear a parable of the
 knave.
 When I was kitchen-knave among the
 rest,
 Fierce was the hearth, and one of my
 co-mates
 Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast
 his coat,
 "Guard it," and there was none to
 meddle with it.
 And such a coat art thou, and thee
 the King
 Gave me to guard, and such a dog
 am I,
 To worry, and not to flee—and—
 knight or knave —
 The knave that doth thee service as
 full knight
 Is all as good, meseems, as any knight
 Toward thy sister's freeing.'

'Ay, Sir Knave !
 Ay, knave, because thou strikest as a
 knight,
 Being but knave, I hate thee all the
 more.'

'Fair damsel, you should worship
 me the more,
 That, being but knave, I throw thine
 enemies.'

'Ay, ay,' she said, 'but thou shalt
 meet thy match.'

So when they touch'd the second
 river-loop,
 Huge on a huge red horse, and all in
 mail
 Burnish'd to blinding, shone the Noon-
 day Sun
 Beyond a raging shallow. As if the
 flower

That blows a globe of after arrow-
 lets
 Ten-thousand-fold had grown, flash'd
 the fierce shield,
 All sun ; and Gareth's eyes had flying
 blots
 Before them when he turn'd from
 watching him.
 He from beyond the roaring shallow
 roar'd,

'What doest thou, brother, in my
 marches here ?'
 And she athwart the shallow shrill'd
 again,

'Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur's
 hall
 Hath overthrown thy brother, and
 hath his arms.'

'Ugh !' cried the Sun, and, vizoring
 up a red

And cipher face of rounded foolish-
 ness,
 Push'd horse across the foamings of
 the ford,

Whom Gareth met mid-stream ; no
 room was there
 For lance or tourney-skill. Four
 strokes they struck

With sword, and these were mighty ;
 the new knight

Had fear he might be shamed ; but as
 the Sun

Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike
 the fifth,

The hoof of his horse slipt in the
stream, the stream ¹⁰²⁰
Descended, and the Sun was wash'd
away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart
the ford ;
So drew him home ; but he that fought
no more,
As being all bone-batter'd on the rock,
Yielded, and Gareth sent him to the
King.
' Myself when I return will plead for
thee.
Lead, and I follow.' Quietly she led.
'Hath not the good wind, damsel,
changed again ?'
' Nay, not a point ; nor art thou victor
here.
There lies a ridge of slate across the
ford ; ¹⁰³⁰
His horse thereon stumbled — ay, for
I saw it.

"O sun" — not this strong fool
whom thou, Sir Knave,
Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappi-
ness —

"O sun, that wakenest all to bliss or pain,
O moon, that layest all to sleep again,
Shine sweetly ; twice my love hath smiled
on me."

'What knowest thou of love-song
or of love ?
Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly
born,
Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea,
perchance, —

"O dewy flowers that open to the sun,
O dewy flowers that close when day is
done, ¹⁰⁴¹
Blow sweetly ; twice my love hath smiled
on me."

'What knowest thou of flowers, ex-
cept, belike,
To garnish meats with ? hath not our
good King
Who lent me thee, the flower of kitch-
endom,
A foolish love for flowers ? what stick
ye round
The pasty ? wherewithal deck the
boar's head ?
Flowers ? nay, the boar hath rosema-
ries and bay.

"O birds that warble to the morning
sky,
O birds that warble as the day goes by,
Sing sweetly ; twice my love hath smiled
on me." ¹⁰⁵¹

'What knowest thou of birds, lark,
mavis, merle,
Linnet ? what dream ye when they
utter forth
May-music growing with the growing
light,
Their sweet sun-worship ? these be
for the snare —
So runs thy fancy — these be for the
spit,
Larding and basting. See thou have
not now
Larded thy last, except thou turn and
fly.
There stands the third fool of their
allegory.'

For there beyond a bridge of treble
bow, ¹⁰⁶⁰
All in a rose-red from the west, and all
Naked it seem'd, and glowing in the
broad
Deep-dimpled current underneath, the
knight
That named himself the Star of Even-
ing stood.

And Gareth, 'Wherefore waits the
madman there
Naked in open dayshine ?' 'Nay,' she
cried,
'Not naked, only wrapt in harden'd
skins
That fit him like his own ; and so ye
cleave
His armor off him, these will turn the
blade.'

Then the third brother shouted o'er
the bridge, ¹⁰⁷⁰
'O brother-star, why shine ye here so
low ?
Thy ward is higher up ; but have ye
slain
The damsel's champion ?' and the
damsel cried :

'No star of thine, but shot from
Arthur's heaven
With all disaster unto thine and
thee !

For both thy younger brethren have
gone down
Before this youth ; and so wilt thou,
Sir Star.
Art thou not old ?'

'Old, damsel, old and hard,
Old, with the might and breath of
twenty boys.'
Said Gareth, 'Old, and over-bold in
brag !' 1080
But that same strength which threw
the Morning Star
Can throw the Evening.'

Then that other blew
A hard and deadly note upon the horn.
'Approach and arm me !' With slow
steps from out
An old storm-beaten, russet, many-
stain'd
Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel came,
And arm'd him in old arms, and
brought a helm
With but a drying evergreen for crest,
And gave a shield whereon the star of
even
Half-tarnish'd and half-bright, his em-
blem, shone. 1090
But when it glitter'd o'er the saddle-
bow,
They madly hurl'd together on the
bridge ;
And Gareth overthrew him, lighted,
drew,
There met him drawn, and overthrew
him again,
But up like fire he started ; and as oft
As Gareth brought him grovelling on
his knees,
So many a time he vaulted up again ;
Till Gareth panted hard, and his great
heart,
Foredooming all his trouble was in
vain,
Labor'd within him, for he seem'd as
one 1100
That all in later, sadder age begins
To war against ill uses of a life,
But these from all his life arise, and
cry,
'Thou hast made us lords, and canst
not put us down !'
He half despairs ; so Gareth seem'd to
strike

Vainly, the damsel clamoring all the
while,
'Well done, knave-knight, well
stricken, O good knight-
knave—
O knave, as noble as any of all the
knights—
Shame me not, shame me not. I have
prophesied—
Strike, thou art worthy of the Table
Round—' 1110
His arms are old, he trusts the hard-
en'd skin—
Strike—strike—the wind will never
change again.'
And Gareth hearing ever stronglier
smote,
And hew'd great pieces of his armor
off him,
But lash'd in vain against the hard-
en'd skin,
And could not wholly bring him
under, more
Than loud Southwesterns, rolling
ridge on ridge,
The buoy that rides at sea, and dips
and springs
For ever ; till at length Sir Gareth's
brand
Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the
hilt. 1120
'I have thee now ;' but forth that
other sprang,
And, all unknightlike, writhed his wiry
arms
Around him, till he felt, despite his
mail,
Strangled, but straining even his utter-
most
Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er
the bridge
Down to the river, sink or swim, and
cried,
'Lead, and I follow.'

But the damsel said :
'I lead no longer ; ride thou at my
side ;
Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-
knaves.

"O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy plain,
O rainbow with three colors after rain, 1131
Shine sweetly ; thrice my love hath smiled
on me."

'Sir, — and, good faith, I fain had added — Knight,
But that I heard thee call thyself a knave, —
Shamed am I that I so rebuked, re-
viled,
Missaid thee. Noble I am, and thought
the King
Scorn'd me and mine; and now thy
pardon, friend,
For thou hast ever answer'd courte-
ously,
And wholly bold thou art, and meek
withal
As any of Arthur's best, but, being
knave, 1140
Hast maz'd my wit. I marvel what
thou art.'

'Damsel,' he said, 'you be not all to
blame,
Saving that you mistrusted our good
King
Would handle scorn, or yield you, ask-
ing, one
Not fit to cope your quest. You said
your say;
Mine answer was my deed. Good
sooth! I hold
He scarce is knight, yea but half-man,
nor meet
To fight for gentle damsel, he, who
lets
His heart be stirr'd with any foolish
heat
At any gentle damsel's waywardness.
Shamed? care not! thy foul sayings
fought for me; 1151
And seeing now thy words are fair,
methinks
There rides no knight, not Lancelot,
his great self,
Hath force to quell me.'

Nigh upon that hour
When the lone hern forgets his melan-
choly,
Lets down his other leg, and stretch-
ing dreams
Of goodly supper in the distant pool,
Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling
at him,
And told him of a cavern hard at
hand,
Where bread and baken meats and
good red wine 1160

Of Southland, which the Lady Lyo-
nors
Had sent her coming champion, waited
him.

Anon they past a narrow comb
wherein
Were slabs of rock with figures,
knights on horse
Sculptured, and deckt in slowly
waning hues.

'Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once
was here,
Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on
the rock
The war of Time against the soul of
man.

And yon four fools have suck'd their
allegory
From these damp walls, and taken but
the form. 1170
Know ye not these?' and Gareth lookt
and read —

In letters like to those the vexillary
Hath left crag-carven o'er the stream-
ing Gelt —

'PHOSPHORUS,' then 'MERIDIES,' —
'HEPERUS' —
'Nox' — 'Mors,' beneath five figures,
armed men,

Slab after slab, their faces forward all,
And running down the Soul, a shape
that fled

With broken wings, torn raiment, and
loose hair,
For help and shelter to the hermit's
cave.

'Follow the faces, and we find it.
Look,
Who comes behind?' 1180

For one — delay'd at first
Thro' helping back the dislocated
Kay

To Camelot, then by what thereafter
chanced,

The damsel's headlong error thro' the
wood —

Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-
loops —

His blue shield-lions cover'd — softly
drew

Behind the twain, and when he saw
the star

Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to him
cried,

'Stay, felon knight, I avenge me for my friend.'

And Gareth crying prick'd against the cry ;

1190

But when they closed — in a moment — at one touch

Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of the world —

Went sliding down so easily, and fell, That when he found the grass within his hands

He laugh'd. The laughter jarr'd upon Lynette.

Harshly she ask'd him, 'Shamed and overthrown,

And tumbled back into the kitchen-knave,

Why laugh ye? that ye blew your boast in vain?'

'Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the son Of old King Lot and good Queen Belli-cent,

1200

And victor of the bridges and the ford, And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown by whom

I know not, all thro' mere unhappiness —

Device and sorcery and unhappiness — Out, sword; we are thrown!' And

Lancelot answer'd: 'Prince, O Gareth — thro' the mere unhappiness

Of one who came to help thee, not to harm,

Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee whole

As on the day when Arthur knighted him.'

Then Gareth: 'Thou — Lancelot! —

thine the hand

1210

That threw me? An some chance to mar the boast

Thy brethren of thee make — which could not chance —

Had sent thee down before a lesser spear,

Shamed had I been, and sad — O Lancelot — thou!'

Whereat the maiden, petulant: 'Lancelot,

Why came ye not, when call'd? and wherefore now

Come ye, not call'd? I gloried in my knave,

Who being still rebuked would answer still

Courteous as any knight — but now, if knight,

The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd and trick'd,

1220

And only wondering wherefore play'd upon;

And doubtful whether I and mine be scorn'd.

Where should be truth if not in Arthur's hall.

In Arthur's presence? Knight, knave, prince and fool,

I hate thee and forever.'

And Lancelot said: 'Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth! knight

art thou

To the King's best wish. O damsel, be you wise,

To call him shamed who is but overthrown?

Thrown have I been, nor once, but many a time.

Victor from vanquish'd issues at the last,

1230

And overthrower from being overthrown.

With sword we have not striven, and thy good horse

And thou are weary; yet not less I felt Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance

of thine.

Well hast thou done; for all the stream is freed,

And thou hast wreak'd his justice on his foes,

And when reviled hast answer'd graciously,

And makest merry when overthrown. Prince, knight,

Hail, knight and prince, and of our Table Round!'

And then when turning to Lynette he told

1240

The tale of Gareth, petulantly she said: 'Ay, well — ay, well — for worse than

being fool'd

Of others, is to fool one's self. A cave, Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats

and drinks

And forage for the horse, and flint for fire.

But all about it flies a honeysuckle.

Seek, till we find.' And when they
sought and found,
Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his
life
Past into sleep; on whom the maiden
gazed:
'Sound sleep be thine! sound cause to
sleep hast thou. ¹²⁵⁰
Wake lusty! Seem I not as tender to
him
As any mother? Ay, but such a one
As all day long hath rated at her child,
And vext his day, but blesses him
asleep—
Good lord, how sweetly smells the
honeysuckle
In the hush'd night, as if the world
were one
Of utter peace, and love, and gentle-
ness!
O Lancelot, Lancelot,' — and she clapt
her hands—
'Full merry am I to find my goodly
knave
Is knight and noble. See now, sworn
have I, ¹²⁶⁰
Else yon black felon had not let me
pass,
To bring thee back to do the battle
with him.
Thus an thou goest, he will fight thee
first;
Who doubts thee victor? so will my
knight-knave
Miss the full flower of this accomplish-
ment.'

Said Lancelot: 'Peradventure he
you name
May know my shield. Let Gareth, an
he will,
Change his for mine, and take my
charger, fresh,
Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle
as well
As he that rides him.' 'Lancelot-like,'
she said, ¹²⁷⁰
'Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as
in all.'

And Gareth, wakening, fiercely
clutch'd the shield:
'Ramp, ye lance-splintering lions, on
whom all spears
Are rotten sticks! ye seem agape to
roar!

Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of your
lord! —
Care not, good beasts, so well I care
for you.
O noble Lancelot, from my hold on
these
Streams virtue — fire — thro' one that
will not shame
Even the shadow of Lancelot under
shield.
Hence; let us go.'

Silent the silent field
They traversed. Arthur's Harp tho'
summer-wan, ¹²⁸¹
In counter motion to the clouds, al-
lured
The glance of Gareth dreaming on his
liege.
A star shot: 'Lo,' said Gareth, 'the
foe falls!'
An owl whoopt: 'Hark the victor
pealing there!'
Suddenly she that rode upon his left
Clung to the shield that Lancelot lent
him, crying:
'Yield, yield him this again; 'tis he
must fight:
I curse the tongue that all thro' yes-
terday
Reveled thee, and hath wrought on
Lancelot now ¹²⁹⁰
To lend thee horse and shield. Won-
ders ye have done,
Miracles ye cannot. Here is glory
enow
In having flung the three. I see thee
maim'd,
Mangled; I swear thou canst not fling
the fourth.'

'And wherefore, damsel? tell me
all ye know.
You cannot scare me; nor rough face,
or voice,
Brute bulk of limb, or boundless sav-
agery
Appal me from the quest.'

'Nay, prince,' she cried,
'God wot, I never look'd upon the face,
Seeing he never rides abroad by day,
But watch'd him have I like a phan-
tom pass ¹³⁰¹
Chilling the night; nor have I heard
the voice.

Always he made his mouthpiece of a
page
Who came and went, and still reported
him
As closing in himself the strength of
ten,
And when his anger tare him, mas-
sacring
Man, woman, lad, and girl — yea, the
soft babe!
Some hold that he hath swallow'd in-
fant flesh,
Monster! O prince, I went for Lance-
lot first,
The quest is Lancelot's; give him
back the shield.' 1310

Said Gareth laughing, 'An he fight
for this,
Belike he wins it as the better man;
Thus — and not else!'

But Lancelot on him urged
All the devisings of their chivalry
When one might meet a mightier than
himself;
How best to manage horse, lance,
sword, and shield,
And so fill up the gap where force
might fail
With skill and fineness. Instant were
his words.

Then Gareth: 'Here be rules. I
know but one —
To dash against mine enemy and to
win. 1320
Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the
joust,
And seen thy way.' 'Heaven help
thee!' sigh'd Lynette.

Then for a space, and under cloud
that grew
To thunder-gloom palling all stars,
they rode
In converse till she made her palfrey
halt,
Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd,
'There.'
And all the three were silent seeing,
pitch'd
Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,
A huge pavilion like a mountain peak
Sunder the glooming crimson on the
marge, 1330

Black, with black banner, and a long
black horn
Beside it hanging; which Sir Gareth
graspt,
And so, before the two could hinder
him,
Sent all his heart and breath thro' all
the horn.
Echo'd the walls; a light twinkled;
anon
Came lights and lights, and once
again he blew;
Whereon were hollow tramlings up
and down
And muffled voices heard, and shad-
ows past;
Till high above him, circled with her
maids,
The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,
Beautiful among lights, and waving
to him 1341
White hands and courtesy. But when
the prince
Three times had blown — after long
hush — at last —
The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,
Thro' those black foldings, that which
housed therein.
High on a night-black horse, in night-
black arms,
With white breast-bone, and barren
ribs of Death,
And crown'd with fleshless laughter
— some ten steps —
In the half-light — thro' the dim dawn
— advanced
The monster, and then paused, and
spake no word. 1350

But Gareth spake and all indig-
nantly:
'Fool, for thou hast, men say, the
strength of ten,
Canst thou not trust the limbs thy
God hath given,
But must, to make the terror of thee
more,
Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries
Of that which Life hath done with,
and the clod,
Less dull than thou, will hide with
mantling flowers
As if for pity?' But he spake no
word;
Which set the horror higher. A
maiden swoon'd;

The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands
and wept, ¹³⁶⁰
As doom'd to be the bride of Night
and Death;
Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his
helm;
And even Sir Lancelot thro' his warm
blood felt
Ice strike, and all that mark'd him
were aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger
fiercely neigh'd,
And Death's dark war-horse bounded
forward with him.
Then those that did not blink the ter-
ror saw
That Death was cast to ground, and
slowly rose.
But with one stroke Sir Gareth split
the skull.
Half fell to right and half to left and
lay. ¹³⁷⁰
Then with a stronger buffet he clove
the helm
As throughly as the skull; and out
from this
Issued the bright face of a blooming
boy
Fresh as a flower new-born, and cry-
ing, 'Knight,
Slay me not; my three brethren bade
me do it,
To make a horror all about the house,
And stay the world from Lady Lyo-
nors.
They never dream'd the passes would
be past.'
Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to one
Not many a moon his younger, 'My
fair child, ¹³⁸⁰
What madness made thee challenge
the chief knight
Of Arthur's hall?' 'Fair Sir, they
bade me do it.
They hate the King and Lancelot, the
King's friend;
They hoped to slay him somewhere on
the stream,
They never dream'd the passes could
be past.'

Then sprang the happier day from
underground;
And Lady Lyonors and her house,
with dance

And revel and song, made merry over
Death,
As being after all their foolish fears
And horrors only proven a blooming
boy. ¹³⁹⁰
So large mirth lived, and Gareth won
the quest.

And he that told the tale in older
times
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,
But he that told it later says Lynette.

THE MARRIAGE OF GERAINT

THE brave Geraint, a knight of
Arthur's court,
A tributary prince of Devon, one
Of that great Order of the Table
Round,
Had married Enid, Yniol's only child,
And loved her as he loved the light of
heaven.
And as the light of heaven varies, now
At sunrise, now at sunset, now by
night
With moon and trembling stars, so
loved Geraint
To make her beauty vary day by day,
In crimsons and in purples and in
gems. ¹⁰
And Enid, but to please her husband's
eye,
Who first had found and loved her in
a state
Of broken fortunes, daily fronted him
In some fresh splendor; and the Queen
herself,
Grateful to Prince Geraint for service
done,
Loved her, and often with her own
white hands
Array'd and deck'd her, as the loveli-
est,
Next after her own self, in all the
court.
And Enid loved the Queen, and with
true heart
Adored her, as the stateliest and the
best ²⁰
And loveliest of all women upon earth.
And seeing them so tender and so
close,
Long in their common love rejoiced
Geraint.

But when a rumor rose about the
 Queen,
 Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,
 Tho' yet there lived no proof, nor yet
 was heard
 The world's loud whisper breaking
 into storm,
 Not less Geraint believed it; and there
 fell
 A horror on him lest his gentle wife,
 Thro' that great tenderness for Guine-
 vere, ³⁰
 Had suffer'd or should suffer any taint
 In nature. Wherefore, going to the
 King,
 He made this pretext, that his prince-
 dom lay
 Close on the borders of a territory
 Wherein were bandit earls, and caitiff
 knights,
 Assassins, and all flyers from the
 hand
 Of Justice, and whatever loathes a
 law;
 And therefore, till the King himself
 should please
 To cleanse this common sewer of all
 his realm,
 He craved a fair permission to depart,
 And there defend his marches. And
 the King ⁴¹
 Mused for a little on his plea, but,
 last,
 Allowing it, the prince and Enid rode,
 And fifty knights rode with them, to
 the shores
 Of Severn, and they past to their own
 land;
 Where, thinking that, if ever yet was
 wife
 True to her lord, mine shall be so to
 me,
 He compass'd her with sweet obser-
 vances
 And worship, never leaving her, and
 grew ⁴⁹
 Forgetful of his promise to the King,
 Forgetful of the falcon and the hunt,
 Forgetful of the tilt and tournament,
 Forgetful of his glory and his name,
 Forgetful of his principedom and its
 cares.
 And this forgetfulness was hateful to
 her.
 And by and by the people, when they
 met

In twos and threes, or fuller compa-
 nies,
 Began to scoff and jeer and babble of
 him
 As of a prince whose manhood was
 all gone,
 And molten down in mere uxorious-
 ness. ⁶⁰
 And this she gather'd from the peo-
 ple's eyes;
 This too the women who attired her
 head,
 To please her, dwelling on his bound-
 less love,
 Told Enid, and they sadden'd her the
 more;
 And day by day she thought to tell
 Geraint,
 But could not out of bashful delicacy,
 While he, that watch'd her sadden,
 was the more
 Suspicious that her nature had a
 taint.

At last, it chanced that on a summer
 morn—
 They sleeping each by either—the
 new sun ⁷⁰
 Beat thro' the blindless casement of
 the room,
 And heated the strong warrior in his
 dreams;
 Who, moving, cast the coverlet aside,
 And bared the knotted column of his
 throat,
 The massive square of his heroic
 breast,
 And arms on which the standing
 muscle sloped,
 As slopes a wild brook o'er a little
 stone,
 Running too vehemently to break
 upon it.
 And Enid woke and sat beside the
 couch,
 Admiring him, and thought within
 herself, ⁸⁴
 Was ever man so grandly made as
 he?
 Then, like a shadow, past the people's
 talk
 And accusation of uxoriousness
 Across her mind, and, bowing over
 him,
 Low to her own heart piteously she
 said:

'O noble breast and all-puissant
 arms,
 Am I the cause, I the poor cause that
 men
 Reproach you, saying all your force
 is gone?
 I *am* the cause, because I dare not
 speak
 And tell him what I think and what
 they say. ⁹⁰
 And yet I hate that he should linger
 here;
 I cannot love my lord and not his
 name.
 Far liefer had I gird his harness on
 him,
 And ride with him to battle and stand
 by,
 And watch his mightful hand striking
 great blows
 At caitiffs and at wrongers of the
 world.
 Far better were I laid in the dark
 earth,
 Not hearing any more his noble voice,
 Not to be folded more in these dear
 arms,
 And darken'd from the high light in
 his eyes, ¹⁰⁰
 Than that my lord thro' me should
 suffer shame.
 Am I so bold, and could I so stand
 by,
 And see my dear lord wounded in the
 strife,
 Or maybe pierced to death before
 mine eyes,
 And yet not dare to tell him what I
 think,
 And how men slur him, saying all his
 force
 Is melted into mere effeminacy?
 O me, I fear that I am no true wife!
 Half inwardly, half audibly she
 spoke,
 And the strong passion in her made
 her weep ¹¹⁰
 True tears upon his broad and naked
 breast,
 And these awoke him, and by great
 mischance
 He heard but fragments of her later
 words,
 And that she fear'd she was not a
 true wife.

And then he thought, 'In spite of all
 my care,
 For all my pains, poor man, for all
 my pains,
 She is not faithful to me, and I see
 her
 Weeping for some gay knight in
 Arthur's hall.'
 Then, tho' he loved and revered
 her too much
 To dream she could be guilty of foul
 act, ¹²⁰
 Right thro' his manful breast darted
 the pang
 That makes a man, in the sweet face
 of her
 Whom he loves most, lonely and mis-
 crable.
 At this he hurl'd his huge limbs out
 of bed,
 And shook his drowsy squire awake
 and cried,
 'My charger and her palfrey;' then
 to her,
 'I will ride forth into the wilderness,
 For, tho' it seems my spurs are yet to
 win,
 I have not fallen so low as some would
 wish.
 And thou, put on thy worst and
 meanest dress ¹³⁰
 And ride with me.' And Enid ask'd,
 amazed,
 'If Enid errs, let Enid learn her
 fault.'
 But he, 'I charge thee, ask not but
 obey.'
 Then she bethought her of a faded
 silk,
 A faded mantle and a faded veil,
 And moving toward a cedarn cabinet,
 Wherein she kept them folded rever-
 ently
 With sprigs of summer laid between
 the folds,
 She took them, and array'd herself
 therein,
 Remembering when first he came on
 her ¹⁴⁰
 Drest in that dress, and how he loved
 her in it,
 And all her foolish fears about the
 dress,
 And all his journey to her, as himself
 Had told her, and their coming to the
 court.

For Arthur on the Whitsuntide be-
fore
Held court at old Caerleon upon
Usk.
There on a day, he sitting high in
hall,
Before him came a forester of Dean,
Wet from the woods, with notice of a
hart
Taller than all his fellows, milky-
white,
First seen that day; these things he
told the King.
Then the good King gave order to let
blow
His horns for hunting on the morrow
morn,
And when the Queen petition'd for
his leave
To see the hunt, allow'd it easily.
So with the morning all the court
were gone.
But Guinevere lay late into the
morn,
Lost in sweet dreams, and dreaming
of her love
For Lancelot, and forgetful of the
hunt,
But rose at last, a single maiden with
her,
Took horse, and forded Usk, and
gain'd the wood;
There, on a little knoll beside it,
stay'd
Waiting to hear the hounds, but heard
instead
A sudden sound of hoofs, for Prince
Geraint,
Late also, wearing neither hunting-
dress
Nor weapon save a golden-hilted
brand,
Came quickly flashing thro' the shal-
low ford
Behind them, and so gallop'd up the
knoll.
A purple scarf, at either end whereof
There swung an apple of the purest
gold,
Sway'd round about him, as he gal-
lop'd up
To join them, glancing like a dragon-
fly
In summer suit and silks of holiday.
Low bow'd the tributary prince, and
she,

Sweetly and stately, and with all
grace
Of womanhood and queenhood, an-
swer'd him:
'Late, late, Sir Prince,' she said,
'later than we!'
'Yea, noble Queen,' he answer'd,
'and so late
That I but come like you to see the
hunt.
Not join it.' 'Therefore wait with
me,' she said;
'For on this little knoll, if anywhere,
There is good chance that we shall
hear the hounds:
Here often they break covert at our
feet.'

And while they listen'd for the dis-
tant hunt,
And chiefly for the baying of Cavall,
King Arthur's hound of deepest
mouth, there rode
Full slowly by a knight, lady, and
dwarf;
Whereof the dwarf lagg'd latest, and
the knight
Had vizor up, and show'd a youthful
face,
Imperious, and of haughtiest linea-
ments.
And Guinevere, not mindful of his
face
In the King's hall, desired his name,
and sent
Her maiden to demand it of the
dwarf,
Who being vicious, old, and irritable,
And doubling all his master's vice of
pride,
Made answer sharply that she should
not know.
'Then will I ask it of himself,' she
said.
'Nay, by my faith, thou shalt not,'
cried the dwarf;
'Thou art not worthy even to speak
of him;'
And when she put her horse toward
the knight,
Struck at her with his whip, and she
return'd
Indignant to the Queen; whereat
Geraint
Exclaiming, 'Surely I will learn the
name,'

Made sharply to the dwarf, and ask'd
 it of him,
 Who answer'd as before; and when
 the prince
 Had put his horse in motion toward
 the knight,
 Struck at him with his whip, and cut
 his cheek.
 The prince's blood spirted upon the
 scarf,
 Dyeing it; and his quick, instinctive
 hand
 Caught at the hilt, as to abolish
 him:
 But he, from his exceeding manfulness
 And pure nobility of temperament,
 Wroth to be wroth at such a worm,
 refrain'd
 From even a word, and so returning
 said:

'I will avenge this insult, noble
 Queen,
 Done in your maiden's person to your-
 self,
 And I will track this vermin to their
 earths;
 For tho' I ride unarm'd, I do not
 doubt
 To find, at some place I shall come at,
 arms
 On loan, or else for pledge; and, being
 found,
 Then will I fight him, and will break
 his pride,
 And on the third day will again be
 here,
 So that I be not fallen in fight. Fare-
 well.'

'Farewell, fair prince,' answer'd
 the stately Queen.
 'Be prosperous in this journey, as in
 all;
 And may you light on all things that
 you love,
 And live to wed with her whom first
 you love.
 But ere you wed with any, bring your
 bride,
 And I, were she the daughter of a
 king,
 Yea, tho' she were a beggar from the
 hedge,
 Will clothe her for her bridals like
 the sun.'

And Prince Geraint, now thinking
 that he heard
 The noble hart at bay, now the far
 horn,
 A little vex'd at losing of the hunt,
 A little at the vile occasion, rode,
 By ups and downs, thro' many a
 grassy glade
 And valley, with fixt eye following
 the three.
 At last they issued from the world of
 wood,
 And climb'd upon a fair and even
 ridge,
 And show'd themselves against the
 sky, and sank.
 And thither came Geraint, and under-
 neath
 Beheld the long street of a little town
 In a long valley, on one side whereof,
 White from the mason's hand, a for-
 tress rose;
 And on one side a castle in decay,
 Beyond a bridge that spann'd a dry
 ravine.
 And out of town and valley came a
 noise
 As of a broad brook o'er a shingly bed
 Brawling, or like a clamor of the rooks
 At distance, ere they settle for the
 night.

And onward to the fortress rode the
 three,
 And enter'd, and were lost behind the
 walls.
 'So,' thought Geraint, 'I have track'd
 him to his earth.'
 And down the long street riding wea-
 rily,
 Found every hostel full, and every-
 where
 Was hammer laid to hoof, and the hot
 hiss
 And bustling whistle of the youth
 who scour'd
 His master's armor; and of such a
 one
 He ask'd, 'What means the tumult in
 the town?'
 Who told him, scouring still, 'The
 sparrow-hawk!'
 Then riding close behind an ancient
 churl,
 Who, smitten by the dusty sloping
 beam,

Went sweating underneath a sack of corn,

Ask'd yet once more what meant the hubbub here?

Who answer'd gruffly, 'Ugh! the sparrow-hawk!'

Then riding further past an armor-er's,

Who, with back turn'd, and bow'd above his work,

Sat riveting a helmet on his knee, He put the selfsame query, but the man

Not turning round, nor looking at him, said : ²⁷⁰

Friend, he that labors for the sparrow-hawk

Has little time for idle questioners.' Whereat Geraint flash'd into sudden spleen :

'A thousand pips eat up your sparrow-hawk!

Tits, wrens, and all wing'd nothings peck him dead!

Ye think the rustic cackle of your bourg

The murmur of the world! What is it to me?

O wretched set of sparrows, one and all,

Who pipe of nothing but of sparrow-hawks!

Speak, if ye be not like the rest, hawk-mad, ²⁸⁰

Where can I get me harborage for the night?

And arms, arms, arms to fight my enemy? Speak!'

Whereat the armorer turning all amazed

And seeing one so gay in purple silks,

Came forward with the helmet yet in hand

And answer'd : 'Pardon me, O stranger knight;

We hold a tourney here to-morrow morn,

And there is scanty time for half the work.

Arms? truth! I know not; all are wanted here.

Harborage? truth, good truth, I know not, save, ²⁹⁰

It may be, at Earl Yniol's, o'er the bridge

Yonder.' He spoke and fell to work again.

Then rode Geraint, a little spleenful yet,

Across the bridge that spann'd the dry ravine.

There musing sat the hoary-headed earl—

His dress a suit of fray'd magnificence,

Once fit for feasts of ceremony—and said :

'Whither, fair son?' to whom Geraint replied,

'O friend, I seek a harborage for the night.'

Then Yniol, 'Enter therefore and partake ³⁰⁰

The slender entertainment of a house Once rich, now poor, but ever open-door'd.'

'Thanks, venerable friend,' replied Geraint;

'So that ye do not serve me sparrow-hawks

For supper, I will enter, I will eat With all the passion of a twelve hours' fast.'

Then sigh'd and smiled the hoary-headed earl,

And answer'd, 'Graver cause than yours is mine

To curse this hedgerow thief, the sparrow-hawk.

But in, go in; for save yourself desire it, ³¹⁰

We will not touch upon him even in jest.'

Then rode Geraint into the castle court,

His charger trampling many a prickly star

Of sprouted thistle on the broken stones.

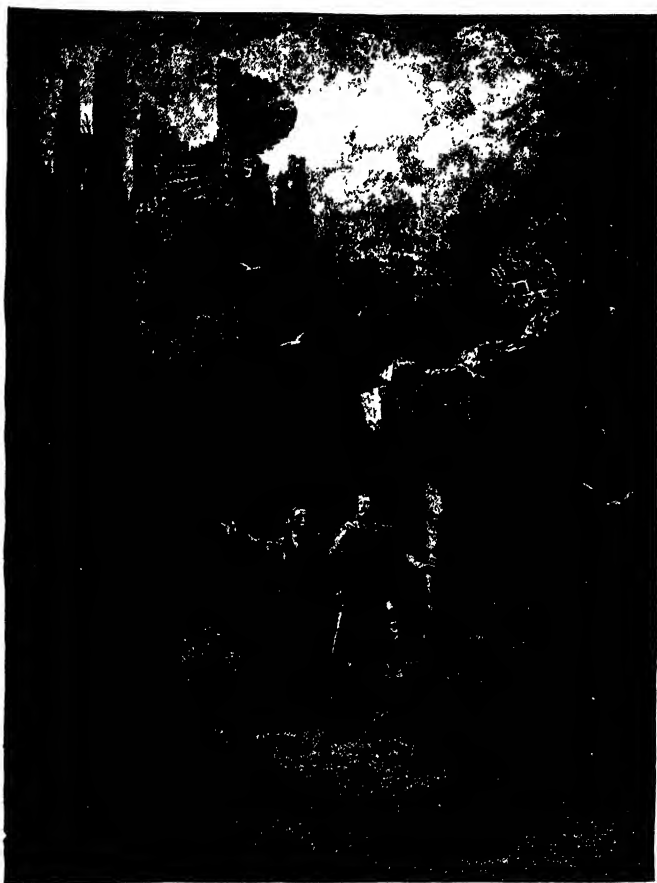
He look'd and saw that all was ruinous.

Here stood a shatter'd archway plumed with fern;

And here had fallen a great part of a tower,

Whole, like a crag that tumbles from the cliff,

And like a crag was gay with wilding flowers;



' And high above a piece of turret stair,
Worn by the feet that now were silent, wound
Bare to the sun '

And high above a piece of turret stair,
Worn by the feet that now were silent,
wound ³²¹
Bare to the sun, and monstrous ivy-
stems
Claspt the gray walls with hairy-fibred
arms,
And suck'd the joining of the stones,
and look'd
A knot, beneath, of snakes, aloft, a
grove.

And while he waited in the castle
court,
The voice of Enid, Yniol's daughter,
rang
Clear thro' the open casement of the
hall,
Singing; and as the sweet voice of a
bird,
Heard by the lander in a lonely isle,
Moves him to think what kind of bird
it is ³³¹

That sings so delicately clear, and
 make
 Conjecture of the plumage and the
 form,
 So the sweet voice of Enid moved
 Geraint,
 And made him like a man abroad at
 morn
 When first the liquid note beloved of
 men
 Comes flying over many a windy wave
 To Britain, and in April suddenly
 Breaks from a coppice gemm'd with
 green and red,
 And he suspends his converse with a
 friend, ³⁴⁰
 Or it may be the labor of his hands,
 To think or say, 'There is the night-
 ingale.'
 So fared it with Geraint, who thought
 and said,
 'Here, by God's grace, is the one voice
 for me.'

It chanced the song that Enid sang
 was one
 Of Fortune and her wheel, and Enid
 sang:

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel, and
 lower the proud;
 Turn thy wild wheel thro' sunshine, storm,
 and cloud;
 Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor
 hate.

'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel with
 smile or frown; ³⁵⁰
 With that wild wheel we go not up or
 down;
 Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

'Smile and we smile, the lords of many
 lands;
 Frown and we smile, the lords of our own
 hands;
 For man is man and master of his fate.

'Turn, turn thy wheel above the staring
 crowd;
 Thy wheel and thou are shadows in the
 cloud;
 Thy wheel and thee we neither love nor
 hate.'

'Hark, by the bird's song ye may
 learn the nest,'
 Said Yniol; 'enter quickly.' Enter-
 ing then, ³⁶⁰

Right o'er a mount of newly-fallen
 stones,
 The dusky-rafter'd many-cobweb'd
 hall,
 He found an ancient dame in dim bro-
 cade;
 And near her, like a blossom vermeil-
 white
 That lightly breaks a faded flower-
 sheath,
 Moved the fair Enid, all in faded
 silk,
 Her daughter. In a moment thought
 Geraint,
 'Here, by God's rood, is the one maid
 for me.'
 But none spake word except the hoary
 earl:
 'Enid, the good knight's horse stands
 in the court; ³⁷⁰
 Take him to stall, and give him corn,
 and then
 Go to the town and buy us flesh and
 wine;
 And we will make us merry as we
 may.
 Our hoard is little, but our hearts are
 great.'

He spake; the prince, as Enid past
 him, fain
 To follow, strode a stride, but Yniol
 caught
 His purple scarf, and held, and said,
 'Forbear!
 Rest! the good house, tho' ruin'd, O
 my son,
 Endures not that her guest should
 serve himself.'
 And reverencing the custom of the
 house ³⁸⁰
 Geraint, from utter courtesies, forebore.

So Enid took his charger to the stall,
 And after went her way across the
 bridge,
 And reach'd the town, and while the
 prince and earl
 Yet spoke together, came again with
 one,
 A youth that, following with a costrel,
 bore
 The means of goodly welcome, flesh
 and wine.
 And Enid brought sweet cakes to make
 them cheer,

And, in her veil enfolded, manchet
bread.

And then, because their hall must also
serve ³⁹⁰

For kitchen, boil'd the flesh, and spread
the board,

And stood behind, and waited on the
three.

And, seeing her so sweet and service-
able,

Geraint had longing in him evermore
To stoop and kiss the tender little
thumb

That cros't the trencher as she laid it
down.

But after all had eaten, then Geraint,
For now the wine made summer in his
veins,

Let his eye rove in following, or rest
On Enid at her lowly handmaid-work,
Now here, now there, about the dusky
hall ; ⁴⁰¹

Then suddenly address the hoary earl :

‘ Fair host and earl, I pray your
courtesy ;

This sparrow-hawk, what is he ? tell
me of him.

His name ? but no, good faith, I will
not have it ;

For if he be the knight whom late I
saw

Ride into that new fortress by your
town,

White from the mason's hand, then
have I sworn

From his own lips to have it — I am
Geraint

Of Devon — for this morning when
the Queen ⁴¹⁰

Sent her own maiden to demand the
name,

His dwarf, a vicious under-shapen
thing,

Struck at her with his whip, and she
return'd

Indignant to the Queen ; and then I
swore

That I would track this caitiff to his
hold,

And fight and break his pride, and
have it of him.

And all unarm'd I rode, and thought
to find

Arms in your town, where all the men
are mad ;

They take the rustic murmur of their
bourg

For the great wave that echoes round
the world. ⁴²⁰

They would not hear me speak ; but
if ye know

Where I can light on arms, or if your-
self

Should have them, tell me, seeing I
have sworn

That I will break his pride and learn
his name,

Avenging this great insult done the
Queen.’

Then cried Earl Yniol : ‘ Art thou
he indeed,

Geraint, a name far-sounded among
men

For noble deeds ? and truly I, when
first

I saw you moving by me on the bridge,
Felt ye were somewhat, yea, and by
your state ⁴³⁰

And presence might have guess'd you
one of those

That eat in Arthur's hall at Camelot.
Nor speak I now from foolish flattery ;

For this dear child hath often heard
me praise

Your feats of arms, and often when I
paused

Hath ask'd again, and ever loved to
hear ;

So grateful is the noise of noble deeds
To noble hearts who see but acts of

wrong.
O, never yet had woman such a pair

Of suitors as this maiden ; first Li-
mours, ⁴⁴⁰

A creature wholly given to brawls and
wine,

Drunk even when he woo'd ; and be
he dead

I know not, but he past to the wild
land.

The second was your foe, the sparrow-
hawk,

My curse, my nephew — I will not
let his name

Slip from my lips if I can help it —
he,

When I that knew him fierce and tur-
bulent

Refused her to him, then his pride
awoke :

And since the proud man often is the
 mean,
 He sow'd a slander in the common
 ear,
 Affirming that his father left him
 gold,
 And in my charge, which was not
 render'd to him;
 Bribed with large promises the men
 who served
 About my person, the more easily
 Because my means were somewhat
 broken into
 Thro' open doors and hospitality;
 Raised my own town against me in
 the night
 Before my Enid's birthday, sack'd my
 house;
 From mine own earldom foully ousted
 me;
 Built that new fort to overawe my
 friends,
 For truly there are those who love
 me yet;
 And keeps me in this ruinous castle
 here,
 Where doubtless he would put me
 soon to death
 But that his pride too much despises
 me.
 And I myself sometimes despise my-
 self;
 For I have let men be and have their
 way,
 Am much too gentle, have not used
 my power;
 Nor know I whether I be very base
 Or very manful, whether very wise
 Or very foolish; only this I know,
 That whatsoever evil happen to me,
 I seem to suffer nothing heart or limb,
 But can endure it all most patiently.'

'Well said, true heart,' replied Ge-
 raint, 'but arms,
 That, if the sparrow-hawk, this
 nephew, fight
 In next day's tourney I may break his
 pride.'

And Yniol answer'd: 'Arms, in-
 deed, but old
 And rusty, old and rusty, Prince Ge-
 raint,
 Are mine, and therefore, at thine ask-
 ing, thine.

But in this tournament can no man
 tilt,
 Except the lady he loves best be there.
 Two forks are fixt into the meadow
 ground,
 And over these is placed a silver wand,
 And over that a golden sparrow-hawk,
 The prize of beauty for the fairest
 there.
 And this, what knight soever be in
 field
 Lays claim to for the lady at his
 side,
 And tilts with my good nephew there-
 upon,
 Who being apt at arms and big of
 bone
 Has ever won it for the lady with
 him,
 And toppling over all antagonism
 Has earn'd himself the name of spar-
 row-hawk.
 But thou, that hast no lady, canst not
 fight.'

To whom Geraint with eyes all
 bright replied,
 Leaning a little toward him: 'Thy
 leave!
 Let me lay lance in rest, O noble host,
 For this dear child, because I never
 saw,
 Tho' having seen all beauties of our
 time,
 Nor can see elsewhere, anything so
 fair.
 And if I fall her name will yet remain
 Untarnish'd as before; but if I live,
 So aid me heaven when at mine utter-
 most
 As I will make her truly my true
 wife!'

Then, howsoever patient, Yniol's
 heart
 Danced in his bosom, seeing better
 days.
 And looking round he saw not Enid
 there—
 Who hearing her own name had stolen
 away—
 But that old dame, to whom full ten-
 derly
 And fondling all her hand in his he
 said:
 'Mother, a maiden is a tender thing,

And best by her that bore her under-
stood. ⁵¹¹

Go thou to rest, but ere thou go to
rest

Tell her, and prove her heart toward
the prince.'

So spake the kindly-hearted earl,
and she

With frequent smile and nod depart-
ing found,

Half disarray'd as to her rest, the
girl;

Whom first she kiss'd on either cheek,
and then

On either shining shoulder laid a hand,
And kept her off and gazed upon her
face,

And told her all their converse in the
hall, ⁵²⁰

Proving her heart. But never light
and shade

Coursed one another more on open
ground

Beneath a troubled heaven than red
and pale

Across the face of Enid hearing her;
While slowly falling as a scale that
falls,

When weight is added only grain by
grain,

Sank her sweet head upon her gentle
breast;

Nor did she lift an eye nor speak a
word,

Rapt in the fear and in the wonder of
it.

So moving without answer to her rest
She found no rest, and ever fail'd to
draw ⁵³¹

The quiet night into her blood, but
lay

Contemplating her own unworthiness;
And when the pale and bloodless east
began

To quicken to the sun, arose, and
raised

Her mother too, and hand in hand
they moved

Down to the meadow where the jousts
were held,

And waited there for Yniol and Ge-
raint.

And thither came the twain, and
when Geraint

Beheld her first in field, awaiting
him, ⁵⁴⁰

He felt, were she the prize of bodily
force,

Himself beyond the rest pushing could
move

The Chair of Idris. Yniol's rusted
arms

Were on his princely person, but thro'
these

Prince-like his bearing shone; and
errant knights

And ladies came, and by and by the
town

Flow'd in and settling circled all the
lists.

And there they fixt the forks into the
ground,

And over these they placed the silver
wand,

And over that the golden sparrow-
hawk. ⁵⁵⁰

Then Yniol's nephew, after trumpet
blown,

Spake to the lady with him and pro-
claim'd,

'Advance and take, the fairest of the
fair,

What I these two years past have
won for thee,

The prize of beauty.' Loudly spake
the prince,

'Forbear; there is a worthier,' and
the knight

With some surprise and thrice as much
disdain

Turn'd, and beheld the four, and all
his face

Glow'd like the heart of a great fire at
Yule,

So burnt he was with passion, crying
out, ⁵⁶⁰

'Do battle for it then,' no more; and
thrice

They clash'd together, and thrice they
brake their spears.

Then each, dishorsed and drawing,
lash'd at each

So often and with such blows that all
the crowd

Wonder'd, and now and then from
distant walls

There came a clapping as of phantom
hands.

So twice they fought, and twice they
breathed, and still

The dew of their great labor and the blood
 Of their strong bodies, flowing, drain'd
 their force.
 But either's force was match'd till
 Yniol's cry, ⁵⁷⁰
 'Remember that great insult done the
 Queen,'
 Increased Geraint's, who heaved his
 blade aloft,
 And crack'd the helmet thro', and bit
 the bone,
 And fell'd him, and set foot upon his
 breast,
 And said, 'Thy name?' To whom
 the fallen man
 Made answer, groaning: 'Edyrn, son
 of Nudd!
 Ashamed am I that I should tell it
 thee.
 My pride is broken; men have seen
 my fall.'
 'Then, Edyrn, son of Nudd,' replied
 Geraint,
 'These two things shalt thou do, or
 else thou diest. ⁵⁸⁰
 First, thou thyself, with damsel and
 with dwarf,
 Shalt ride to Arthur's court and, com-
 ing there,
 Crave pardon for that insult done the
 Queen,
 And shalt abide her judgment on it;
 next,
 Thou shalt give back their earldom to
 thy kin.
 These two things shalt thou do, or
 thou shalt die.'
 And Edyrn answer'd, 'These things
 will I do,
 For I have never yet been overthrown,
 And thou hast overthrown me, and
 my pride
 Is broken down, for Enid sees my fall!'
 And rising up he rode to Arthur's
 court, ⁵⁹¹
 And there the Queen forgave him eas-
 ily.
 And, being young, he changed and
 came to loathe
 His crime of traitor, slowly drew him-
 self
 Bright from his old dark life, and fell
 at last
 In the great battle fighting for the
 King.

But when the third day from the
 hunting-morn
 Made a low splendor in the world, and
 wings
 Moved in her ivy, Enid, for she lay
 With her fair head in the dim-yellow
 light, ⁶⁰⁰
 Among the dancing shadows of the
 birds,
 Woke and bethought her of her pro-
 mise given
 No later than last eve to Prince Ge-
 raint—
 So bent he seem'd on going the third
 day,
 He would not leave her till her pro-
 mise given—
 To ride with him this morning to the
 court,
 And there be made known to the
 stately Queen,
 And there be wedded with all cere-
 mony.
 At this she cast her eyes upon her dress,
 And thought it never yet had look'd
 so mean. ⁶¹⁰
 For as a leaf in mid-November is
 To what it was in mid-October, seem'd
 The dress that now she look'd on to
 the dress
 She look'd on ere the coming of Ge-
 raint.
 And still she look'd, and still the ter-
 ror grew
 Of that strange bright and dreadful
 thing, a court,
 All staring at her in her faded silk;
 And softly to her own sweet heart she
 said:

'This noble prince who won our
 earldom back,
 So splendid in his acts and his attire,
 Sweet heaven, how much I shall dis-
 credit him! ⁶²¹
 Would he could tarry with us here
 awhile,
 But being so beholden to the prince,
 It were but little grace in any of us,
 Bent as he seem'd on going this third
 day,
 To seek a second favor at his hands.
 Yet if he could but tarry a day or two,
 Myself would work eye dim and finger
 lame
 Far liefer than so much discredit him.'

<p>And Enid fell in longing for a dress⁶³⁰ All branch'd and flower'd with gold, a costly gift Of her good mother, given her on the night Before her birthday, three sad years ago, That night of fire, when Edyrn sack'd their house And scatter'd all they had to all the winds;</p>	<p>For while the mother show'd it, and the two Were turning and admiring it, the work To both appear'd so costly, rose a cry That Edyrn's men were on them, and they fled With little save the jewels they had on, Which being sold and sold had bought them bread.⁶⁴¹ And Edyrn's men had caught them in their flight,</p>
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"First, thou thyself, with damsel and with dwarf,
Shalt ride to Arthur's court"

And placed them in this ruin ; and
 she wish'd
 The prince had found her in her an-
 cient home ;
 Then let her fancy flit across the past,
 And roam the goodly places that she
 knew ;
 And last bethought her how she used
 to watch,
 Near that old home, a pool of golden
 carp ;
 And one was patch'd and blurr'd and
 lustreless
 Among his burnish'd brethren of the
 pool ;
 And half asleep she made comparison
 Of that and these to her own faded self
 And the gay court, and fell asleep
 again,
 And dreamt herself was such a faded
 form
 Among her burnish'd sisters of the
 pool.
 But this was in the garden of a king,
 And tho' she lay dark in the pool she
 knew
 That all was bright ; that all about
 were birds
 Of sunny plume in gilded trellis-work ;
 That all the turf was rich in plots that
 look'd
 Each like a garnet or a turkis in it ;
 And lords and ladies of the high court
 went
 In silver tissue talking things of state ;
 And children of the King in cloth of
 gold
 Glanced at the doors or gambol'd
 down the walks.
 And while she thought, 'They will
 not see me,' came
 A stately queen whose name was
 Guinevere,
 And all the children in their cloth of
 gold
 Ran to her, crying, 'If we have fish
 at all
 Let them be gold ; and charge the
 gardeners now
 To pick the faded creature from the
 pool,
 And cast it on the mixen that it die.'
 And therewithal one came and seized
 on her,
 And Enid started waking, with her
 heart

All overshadowed by the foolish dream,
 And lo ! it was her mother grasping her
 To get her well awake ; and in her hand
 A suit of bright apparel, which she laid
 Flat on the couch, and spoke exult-
 ingly :

'See here, my child, how fresh the
 colors look,
 How fast they hold, like colors of a
 shell
 That keeps the wear and polish of the
 wave.
 Why not ? It never yet was worn, I
 trow :
 Look on it, child, and tell me if ye
 know it.'

And Enid look'd, but, all confused
 at first,
 Could scarce divide it from her foolish
 dream.
 Then suddenly she knew it and re-
 joiced,
 And answer'd, 'Yea, I know it ; your
 good gift,
 So sadly lost on that unhappy night ;
 Your own good gift !' 'Yea, surely,'
 said the dame,
 'And gladly given again this happy
 morn.
 For when the jousts were ended yes-
 terday,
 Went Yniol thro' the town, and every-
 where
 He found the sack and plunder of our
 house
 All scatter'd thro' the houses of the
 town,
 And gave command that all which
 once was ours
 Should now be ours again ; and yester-
 eve,
 While ye were talking sweetly with
 your prince,
 Came one with this and laid it in my
 hand,
 For love or fear, or seeking favor of
 us,
 Because we have our earldom back
 again.
 And yester-eve I would not tell you
 of it,
 But kept it for a sweet surprise at
 morn.
 Yea, truly is it not a sweet surprise ?

For I myself unwillingly have worn
 My faded suit, as you, my child, have
 yours,
 And, howsoever patient, Yniol his.
 Ah, dear, he took me from a goodly
 house,
 With store of rich apparel, sumptuous
 fare,
 And page, and maid, and squire, and
 seneschal, ⁷¹⁰
 And pastime both of hawk and hound,
 and all
 That appertains to noble maintenance.
 Yea, and he brought me to a goodly
 house;
 But since our fortune swerved from
 sun to shade,
 And all thro' that young traitor, cruel
 need
 Constrain'd us, but a better time has
 come.
 So clothe yourself in this, that better
 fits
 Our mended fortunes and a prince's
 bride,
 For tho' ye won the prize of fairest
 fair,
 And tho' I heard him call you fairest
 fair, ⁷²⁰
 Let never maiden think, however fair,
 She is not fairer in new clothes than
 old.
 And should some great court-lady say,
 the prince
 Hath pick'd a ragged-robin from the
 hedge,
 And like a madman brought her to
 the court,
 Then were ye shamed, and, worse,
 might shame the prince
 To whom we are beholden; but I
 know,
 When my dear child is set forth at her
 best,
 That neither court nor country, tho'
 they sought
 Thro' all the provinces like those of old
 That lighted on Queen Esther, has her
 match.' ⁷³¹

Here ceased the kindly mother out
 of breath,
 And Enid listen'd brightening as she
 lay;
 Then, as the white and glittering star
 of morn

Parts from a bank of snow, by and by
 Slips into golden cloud, the maiden
 rose,
 And left her maiden couch, and robed
 herself,
 Help'd by the mother's careful hand
 and eye,
 Without a mirror, in the gorgeous
 gown;
 Who, after, turn'd her daughter round,
 and said ⁷⁴⁰
 She never yet had seen her half so fair;
 And call'd her like that maiden in the
 tale,
 Whom Gwydion made by glamour out
 of flowers,
 And sweeter than the bride of Cassive-
 laun,
 Flur, for whose love the Roman Cæsar
 first
 Invaded Britain: 'But we beat him
 back,
 As this great prince invaded us, and
 we,
 Not beat him back, but welcomed him
 with joy.
 And I can scarcely ride with you to
 court,
 For old am I, and rough the ways and
 wild; ⁷⁵⁰
 But Yniol goes, and I full oft shall
 dream
 I see my princess as I see her now,
 Clothed with my gift and gay among
 the gay.'

But while the women thus rejoiced,
 Geraint
 Woke where he slept in the high hall,
 and call'd
 For Enid, and when Yniol made report
 Of that good mother making Enid gay
 In such apparel as might well besem
 His princess, or indeed the stately
 Queen,
 He answer'd: 'Earl, entreat her by my
 love, ⁷⁶⁰
 Albeit I give no reason but my wish,
 That she ride with me in her faded
 silk.'
 Yniol with that hard message went; it
 fell
 Like flaws in summer laying lusty
 corn;
 For Enid, all abash'd, she knew not
 why,

Dared not to glance at her good
 mother's face,
 But silently, in all obedience,
 Her mother silent too, nor helping
 her,
 Laid from her limbs the costly-broid-
 er'd gift,
 And robed them in her ancient suit
 again, ⁷⁷⁰
 And so descended. Never man rejoiced
 More than Geraint to greet her thus
 attired;
 And glancing all at once as keenly at
 her
 As careful robins eye the delver's toil,
 Made her cheek burn and either eyelid
 fall,
 But rested with her sweet face satis-
 fied;
 Then seeing cloud upon the mother's
 brow,
 Her by both hands he caught, and
 sweetly said:

'O my new mother, be not wroth or
 grieved
 At thy new son, for my petition to
 her. ⁷⁸⁰
 When late I left Caerleon, our great
 Queen,
 In words whose echo lasts, they were
 so sweet,
 Made promise that, whatever bride I
 brought,
 Herself would clothe her like the sun
 in heaven.
 Thereafter, when I reach'd this ruin'd
 hall,
 Beholding one so bright in dark estate,
 I vow'd that, could I gain her, our fair
 Queen,
 No hand but hers, should make your
 Enid burst
 Sunlike from cloud — and likewise
 thought perhaps,
 That service done so graciously would
 bind ⁷⁹⁰
 The two together; fain I would the
 two
 Should love each other. How can Enid
 find
 A nobler friend? Another thought
 was mine:
 I came among you here so suddenly
 That tho' her gentle presence at the
 lists

Might well have served for proof that
 I was loved,
 I doubted whether daughter's tender-
 ness,
 Or easy nature, might not let itself
 Be moulded by your wishes for her
 weal;
 Or whether some false sense in her
 own self ⁸⁰⁰
 Of my contrasting brightness overbore
 Her fancy dwelling in this dusky hall,
 And such a sense might make her long
 for court
 And all its perilous glories; and I
 thought,
 That could I somehow prove such force
 in her
 Link'd with such love for me that at
 a word,
 No reason given her, she could cast
 aside
 A splendor dear to women, new to her,
 And therefore dearer; or if not so new,
 Yet therefore tenfold dearer by the
 power ⁸¹⁰
 Of intermitted usage; then I felt
 That I could rest, a rock in ebbs and
 flows,
 Fixt on her faith. Now, therefore, I
 do rest,
 A prophet certain of my prophecy,
 That never shadow of mistrust can
 cross
 Between us. Grant me pardon for my
 thoughts;
 And for my strange petition I will
 make
 Amends hereafter by some gaudy-day,
 When your fair child shall wear your
 costly gift
 Beside your own warm hearth, with,
 on her knees, ⁸²⁰
 Who knows? another gift of the high
 God,
 Which, maybe, shall have learn'd to
 lisp you thanks.'

He spoke; the mother smiled, but
 half in tears,
 Then brought a mantle down and
 wrapt her in it,
 And claspt and kiss'd her, and they
 rode away.

Now thrice that morning Guinevere
 had climb'd

The giant tower, from whose high
 crest, they say,
 Men saw the goodly hills of Somerset,
 And white sails flying on the yellow
 sea;
 But not to goodly hill or yellow sea ⁸³⁰
 Look'd the fair Queen, but up the vale
 of Usk,
 By the flat meadow, till she saw them
 come;
 And then descending met them at the
 gates,
 Embraced her with all welcome as a
 friend,
 And did her honor as the prince's
 bride,
 And clothed her for her bridals like
 the sun;
 And all that week was old Caerleon
 gay,
 For by the hands of Dubric, the high
 saint,
 They twain were wedded with all
 ceremony.

And this was on the last year's
 Whitsuntide. ⁸⁴⁰
 But Enid ever kept the faded silk,
 Remembering how first he came on
 her
 Drest in that dress, and how he loved
 her in it,
 And all her foolish fears about the
 dress,
 And all his journey toward her, as
 himself
 Had told her, and their coming to the
 court.

And now this morning when he said
 to her,
 'Put on your worst and meanest dress,'
 she found
 And took it, and array'd herself therein.

GERAINT AND ENID

O PURBLIND race of miserable men,
 How many among us at this very hour
 Do forge a lifelong trouble for our-
 selves,
 By taking true for false, or false for
 true;
 Here, thro' the feeble twilight of this
 world

Groping, how many, until we pass and
 reach
 That other where we see as we are
 seen!

So fared it with Geraint, who issu-
 ing forth
 That morning, when they both had got
 to horse,
 Perhaps because he loved her passion-
 ately, ¹⁰
 And felt that tempest brooding round
 his heart
 Which, if he spoke at all, would break
 perforce
 Upon a head so dear in thunder, said:
 'Not at my side. I charge thee ride
 before,
 Ever a good way on before; and this
 I charge thee, on thy duty as a wife,
 Whatever happens, not to speak to me,
 No, not a word!' and Enid was aghast;
 And forth they rode, but scarce three
 paces on,
 When crying out, 'Effeminate as I am,
 I will not fight my way with gilded
 arms, ²¹
 All shall be iron;' he loosed a mighty
 purse,
 Hung at his belt, and hurl'd it toward
 the squire.
 So the last sight that Enid had of home
 Was all the marble threshold flashing,
 strown
 With gold and scatter'd coinage, and
 the squire
 Chafing his shoulder. Then he cried
 again,
 'To the wilds!' and Enid leading down
 the tracks
 Thro' which he bade her lead him on,
 they past
 The marches, and by bandit-haunted
 holds, ³⁰
 Gray swamps and pools, waste places
 of the hern,
 And wildernesses, perilous paths, they
 rode.
 Round was their pace at first, but
 slacken'd soon.
 A stranger meeting them had surely
 thought,
 They rode so slowly and they look'd
 so pale,
 That each had suffer'd some exceeding
 wrong.

For he was ever saying to himself,
 'O, I that wasted time to tend upon
 her,
 To compass her with sweet observ-
 ances,
 To dress her beautifully and keep her
 true' —⁴⁰
 And there he broke the sentence in his
 heart
 Abruptly, as a man upon his tongue
 May break it when his passion masters
 him.
 And she was ever praying the sweet
 heavens
 To save her dear lord whole from any
 wound.
 And ever in her mind she cast about
 For that unnoticed failing in her-
 self
 Which made him look so cloudy and
 so cold;
 Till the great plover's human whistle
 amazed
 Her heart, and glancing round the
 waste she fear'd⁵⁰
 In every wavering brake an ambus-
 cade;
 Then thought again, 'If there be such
 in me,
 I might amend it by the grace of Hea-
 ven,
 If he would only speak and tell me of
 it.'

But when the fourth part of the day
 was gone,
 Then Enid was aware of three tall
 knights
 On horseback, wholly arm'd, behind a
 rock
 In shadow, waiting for them, caitiffs
 all;
 And heard one crying to his fellow,
 'Look,
 Here comes a laggard hanging down
 his head,⁶⁰
 Who seems no bolder than a beaten
 hound;
 Come, we will slay him and will have
 his horse
 And armor, and his damsel shall be
 ours.'

Then Enid ponder'd in her heart,
 and said:
 'I will go back a little to my lord,

And I will tell him all their caitiff
 talk;
 For, be he wroth even to slaying
 me,
 Far liefer by his dear hand had I die
 Than that my lord should suffer loss
 or shame.'

Then she went back some paces of
 return,⁷⁰
 Met his full frown timidly firm, and
 said:
 'My lord, I saw three bandits by the
 rock
 Waiting to fall on you, and heard
 them boast
 That they would slay you, and pos-
 sess your horse
 And armor, and your damsel should
 be theirs.'

He made a wrathful answer: 'Did
 I wish
 Your warning or your silence? one
 command
 I laid upon you, not to speak to me,
 And thus ye keep it! Well then,
 look — for now,
 Whether ye wish me victory or de-
 feat,⁸⁰
 Long for my life or hunger for my
 death,
 Yourself shall see my vigor is not
 lost.'

Then Enid waited pale and sorrow-
 ful,
 And down upon him bare the bandit
 three.
 And at the midmost charging, Prince
 Geraint
 Drave the long spear a cubit thro' his
 breast
 And out beyond; and then against
 his brace
 Of comrades, each of whom had
 broken on him
 A lance that splinter'd like an icicle,
 Swung from his brand a windy buffet
 out⁹⁰
 Once, twice, to right, to left, and
 stunn'd the twain
 Or slew them, and dismounting, like a
 man
 That skins the wild beast after slay-
 ing him,

Stript from the three dead wolves of
 woman born
 The three gay suits of armor which
 they wore,
 And let the bodies lie, but bound the
 suits
 Of armor on their horses, each on each,
 And tied the bridle-reins of all the
 three
 Together, and said to her, 'Drive
 them on
 Before you;' and she drove them
 thro' the waste. 100

He follow'd nearer; ruth began to
 work
 Against his anger in him, while he
 watch'd
 The being he loved best in all the
 world,
 With difficulty in mild obedience
 Driving them on. He fain had spoken
 to her,
 And loosed in words of sudden fire
 the wrath
 And smoulder'd wrong that burnt him
 all within;
 But evermore it seem'd an easier
 thing
 At once without remorse to strike her
 dead
 Than to cry 'Halt,' and to her own
 bright face 110
 Accuse her of the least immodesty:
 And thus tongue-tied, it made him
 wroth the more
 That she *could* speak whom his own
 ear had heard
 Call herself false, and suffering thus
 he made
 Minutes an age; but in scarce longer
 time
 Than at Caerleon the full-tided Usk,
 Before he turn to fall seaward again,
 Pauses, did Enid, keeping watch, be-
 hold
 In the first shallow shade of a deep
 wood,
 Before a gloom of stubborn-shafted
 oaks, 120
 Three other horsemen waiting, wholly
 arm'd,
 Whereof one seem'd far larger than
 her lord,
 And shook her pulses, crying, 'Look,
 a prize!

Three horses and three goodly suits of
 arms,
 And all in charge of whom? a girl!
 set on.'
 'Nay,' said the second, 'yonder comes
 a knight.'
 The third, 'A craven; how he hangs
 his head!'
 The giant answer'd merrily, 'Yea,
 but one?
 Wait here, and when he passes fall
 upon him!'

And Enid ponder'd in her heart and
 said: 130
 'I will abide the coming of my lord,
 And I will tell him all their villainy.
 My lord is weary with the fight before,
 And they will fall upon him unawares.
 I needs must disobey him for his
 good;
 How should I dare obey him to his
 harm?
 Needs must I speak, and tho' he kill
 me for it,
 I save a life dearer to me than mine.'

And she abode his coming, and said
 to him
 With timid firmness, 'Have I leave to
 speak?' 140
 He said, 'Ye take it, speaking,' and
 she spoke:

'There lurk three villains yonder in
 the wood,
 And each of them is wholly arm'd,
 and one
 Is larger-limb'd than you are, and
 they say
 That they will fall upon you while ye
 pass.'

To which he flung a wrathful an-
 swer back:
 'And if there were an hundred in the
 wood,
 And every man were larger-limb'd
 than I,
 And all at once should sally out upon
 me,
 I swear it would not ruffle me so
 much 150
 As you that not obey me. Stand
 aside,
 And if I fall, cleave to the better man.'

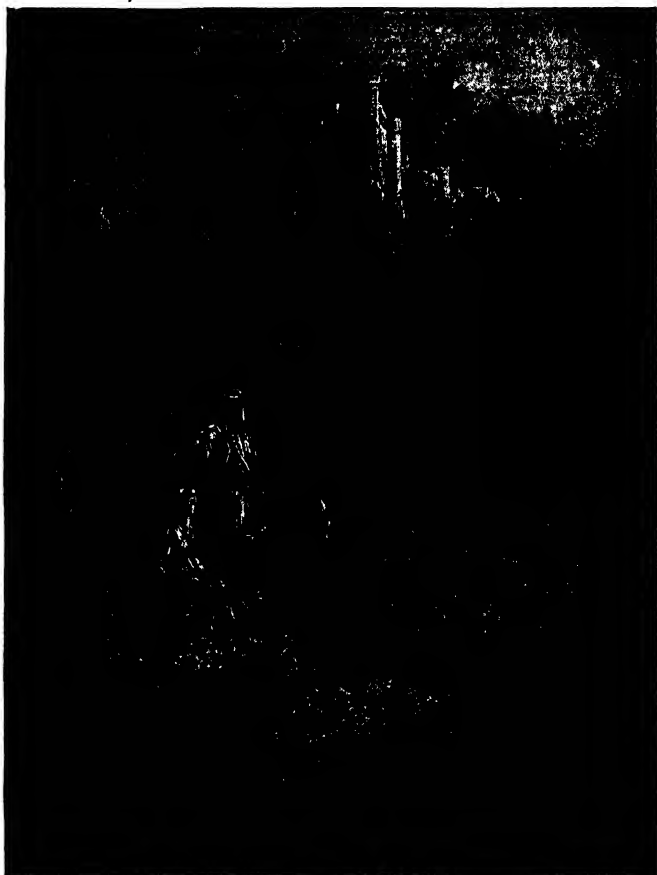
And Enid stood aside to wait the event,
 Not dare to watch the combat, only breathe.
 Short fits of prayer, at every stroke a breath,
 And he she dreaded most bare down upon him.
 Aim'd at the helm, his lance err'd ;
 but Geraint's,
 A little in the late encounter strain'd,
 Struck thro' the bulky bandit's corselet home,
 And then brake short, and down his enemy roll'd, ¹⁶⁰
 And there lay still ; as he that tells the tale
 Saw once a great piece of a promontory,
 That had a sapling growing on it, slide
 From the long shore-cliff's windy walls to the beach,
 And there lie still, and yet the sapling grew ;
 So lay the man transfixt. His craven pair
 Of comrades making slower at the prince,
 When now they saw their bulwark fallen, stood ;
 On whom the victor, to confound them more,
 Spurr'd with his terrible war-cry ; for as one, ¹⁷⁰
 That listens near a torrent mountain-brook,
 All thro' the crash of the near cataract hears
 The drumming thunder of the huger fall
 At distance, were the soldiers wont to hear
 His voice in battle, and be kindled by it,
 And foemen scared, like that false pair who turn'd
 Flying, but, overtaken, died the death
 Themselves had wrought on many an innocent.

Thereon Geraint, dismounting,
 pick'd the lance
 That pleased him best, and drew from those dead wolves ¹⁸⁰
 Their three gay suits of armor, each from each,

And bound them on their horses, each on each,
 And tied the bridle-reins of all the three
 Together, and said to her, 'Drive them on
 Before you,' and she drove them thro' the wood.

He follow'd nearer still. The pain she had
 To keep them in the wild ways of the wood,
 Two sets of three laden with jingling arms,
 Together, served a little to disedge
 The sharpness of that pain about her heart ; ¹⁹⁰
 And they themselves, like creatures gently born
 But into bad hands fallen, and now so long
 By bandits groom'd, prick'd their light ears, and felt
 Her low firm voice and tender government.

So thro' the green gloom of the wood they past,
 And issuing under open heavens beheld
 A little town with towers, upon a rock,
 And close beneath, a meadow gemlike chased
 In the brown wild, and mowers mowing in it ;
 And down a rocky pathway from the place ²⁰⁰
 There came a fair-hair'd youth, that in his hand
 Bare victual for the mowers ; and Geraint
 Had ruth again on Enid looking pale.
 Then, moving downward, to the meadow ground,
 He, when the fair-hair'd youth came by him, said,
 'Friend, let her eat ; the damsel is so faint.'
 'Yea, willingly,' replied the youth ;
 'and thou,
 My lord, eat also, tho' the fare is coarse,
 And only meet for mowers ;' then set down



“Friend, let her eat; the damsel is so faint”

His basket, and dismounting on the
sward 210
They let the horses graze, and ate
themselves.
And Enid took a little delicately,
Less having stomach for it than de-
sire
To close with her lord's pleasure, but
Geraint
Ate all the mowers' victual unawares,
And when he found all empty was
amazed;

And 'Boy,' said he, 'I have eaten all,
but take
A horse and arms for guerdon; choose
the best.'
He, reddening in extremity of de-
light,
'My lord, you overpay me fifty-fold.'
'Ye will be all the wealthier,' cried
the prince. 221
'I take it as free gift, then,' said the
boy,
'Not guerdon; for myself can easily,

While your good damsel rests, return
and fetch
Fresh victual for these mowers of our
earl;
For these are his, and all the field is
his,
And I myself am his; and I will tell
him
How great a man thou art. He loves
to know
When men of mark are in his territory;
And he will have thee to his palace
here,²³⁰
And serve thee costlier than with
mowers' fare.'

Then said Geraint: 'I wish no bet-
ter fare;
I never ate with angrier appetite
Than when I left your mowers dinner-
less.
And into no earl's palace will I go.
I know, God knows, too much of pal-
aces!
And if he want me, let him come to
me.
But hire us some fair chamber for the
night,
And stalling for the horses, and return
With victual for these men, and let us
know.'²⁴⁰

'Yea, my kind lord,' said the glad
youth, and went,
Held his head high, and thought him-
self a knight,
And up the rocky pathway disappear'd,
Leading the horse, and they were left
alone.

But when the prince had brought
his errant eyes
Home from the rock, sideways he let
them glance
At Enid, where she droopt. His own
false doom,
That shadow of mistrust should never
cross
Betwixt them, came upon him, and he
sigh'd;
Then with another humorous ruth re-
mark'd²⁵⁰
The lusty mowers laboring dinnerless,
And watch'd the sun blaze on the
turning scythe,
And after nodded sleepily in the heat.

But she, remembering her old ruin'd
hall,
And all the windy clamor of the daws
About her hollow turret, pluck'd the
grass
There growing longest by the mea-
dow's edge,
And into many a listless annulet,
Now over, now beneath her marriage
ring,
Wove and unwove it, till the boy re-
turn'd²⁶⁰
And told them of a chamber, and they
went;
Where, after saying to her, 'If ye will,
Call for the woman of the house,' to
which
She answer'd, 'Thanks, my lord;' the
two remain'd
Apart by all the chamber's width, and
mute
As creatures voiceless thro' the fault
of birth,
Or two wild men supporters of a
shield,
Painted, who stare at open space, nor
glance
The one at other, parted by the shield.

On a sudden, many a voice along
the street,²⁷⁰
And heel against the pavement echo-
ing, burst
Their drowse; and either started while
the door,
Push'd from without, drave backward
to the wall,
And midmost of a rout of roisterers,
Femininely fair and dissolutely pale,
Her suitor in old years before Geraint
Enter'd, the wild lord of the place,
Limours.
He moving up with pliant courtliness
Greeted Geraint full face, but stealth-
ily,
In the mid-warmth of welcome and
graspt hand,²⁸⁰
Found Enid with the corner of his eye,
And knew her sitting sad and solitary.
Then cried Geraint for wine and
goodly cheer
To feed the sudden guest, and sump-
tuously,
According to his fashion, bade the host
Call in what men soever were his
friends,

And feast with these in honor of their earl;
 'And care not for the cost; the cost is mine.'

And wine and food were brought,
 and Earl Limours
 Drank till he jested with all ease, and told²⁹⁰
 Free tales, and took the word and play'd upon it,
 And made it of two colors; for his talk,
 When wine and free companions kindled him,
 Was wont to glance and sparkle like a gem
 Of fifty facets; thus he moved the prince
 To laughter and his comrades to applause.
 Then when the prince was merry, ask'd Limours,
 'Your leave, my lord, to cross the room, and speak
 To your good damsel there who sits apart,
 And seems so lonely?' 'My free leave,' he said;³⁰⁰
 'Get her to speak; she doth not speak to me.'
 Then rose Limours, and looking at his feet,
 Like him who tries the bridge he fears may fail,
 Crost and came near, lifted adoring eyes,
 Bow'd at her side and utter'd whisperingly:

'Enid, the pilot star of my lone life,
 Enid, my early and my only love,
 Enid, the loss of whom hath turn'd me wild —
 What chance is this? how is it I see you here?
 Ye are in my power at last, are in my power.³¹⁰
 Yet fear me not; I call mine own self wild,
 But keep a touch of sweet civility
 Here in the heart of waste and wilderness.
 I thought, but that your father came between,
 In former days you saw me favorably.

And if it were so do not keep it back.
 Make me a little happier; let me know it.

Owe you me nothing for a life half-lost?

Yea, yea, the whole dear debt of all you are.

And, Enid, you and he, I see with joy,³²⁰

Ye sit apart, you do not speak to him,
 You come with no attendance, page or maid,

To serve you — doth he love you as of old?

For, call it lovers' quarrels, yet I know

Tho' men may bicker with the things they love,

They would not make them laughable in all eyes,

Not while they loved them; and your wretched dress,

A wretched insult on you, dumbly speaks

Your story, that this man loves you no more.

Your beauty is no beauty to him now.
 A common chance — right well I know it — pall'd —³³¹

For I know men; nor will ye win him back,

For the man's love once gone never returns.

But here is one who loves you as of old;

With more exceeding passion than of old.

Good, speak the word; my followers ring him round.

He sits unarm'd; I hold a finger up;
 They understand. Nay, I do not mean blood;

Nor need ye look so scared at what I say.

My malice is no deeper than a moat,
 No stronger than a wall. There is the keep;

He shall not cross us more; speak but the word.³⁴¹

Or speak it not; but then by Him that made me

The one true lover whom you ever own'd,

I will make use of all the power I have.
 O, pardon me! the madness of that hour

When first I parted from thee moves
me yet.

At this the tender sound of his own
voice
And sweet self-pity, or the fancy of it,
Made his eye moist; but Enid fear'd
his eyes, ³⁵⁰
Moist as they were, wine-heated from
the feast,
And answer'd with such craft as women
use,
Guilty or guiltless, to stave off a chance
That breaks upon them perilously, and
said :

'Earl, if you love me as in former
years,
And do not practise on me, come with
morn,
And snatch me from him as by vio-
lence.
Leave me to-night; I am weary to the
death.'

Low at leave-taking, with his bran-
dish'd plume
Brushing his instep, bow'd the all-
amorous earl, ³⁶⁰
And the stout prince bade him a loud
good-night.
He moving homeward babbled to his
men,
How Enid never loved a man but him,
Nor cared a broken egg-shell for her
lord.

But Enid left alone with Prince Ge-
raint,
Debating his command of silence
given,
And that she now perforce must vio-
late it,
Held commune with herself, and while
she held
He fell asleep, and Enid had no heart
To wake him, but hung o'er him,
wholly pleased ³⁷⁰
To find him yet unwounded after fight,
And hear him breathing low and
equally.
Anon she rose and, stepping lightly,
heap'd
The pieces of his armor in one place,
All to be there against a sudden
need;

Then dozed awhile herself, but, over-
toil'd

By that day's grief and travel, ever-
more

Seem'd catching at a rootless thorn,
and then

Went slipping down horrible preci-
pices,

And strongly striking out her limbs
awoke; ³⁸⁰

Then thought she heard the wild earl
at the door,

With all his rout of random followers.
Sound on a dreadful trumpet, sum-
moning her;

Which was the red cock shouting to
the light,

As the gray dawn stole o'er the dewy
world

And glimmer'd on his armor in the
room.

And once again she rose to look at it,
But touch'd it unawares; jangling, the
casque

Fell, and he started up and stared at
her.

Then breaking his command of silence
given, ³⁹⁰

She told him all that Earl Limours had
said,

Except the passage that he loved her
not;

Nor left untold the craft herself had
used,

But ended with apology so sweet,
Low-spoken, and of so few words, and
seem'd

So justified by that necessity,
That tho' he thought, 'Was it for him
she wept

In Devon?' he but gave a wrathful
groan,

Saying, 'Your sweet faces make good
fellows fools

And traitors. Call the host and bid
him bring

Charger and palfrey.' So she glided
out ⁴⁰⁰

Among the heavy breathings of the
house,

And like a household spirit at the walls
Beat, till she woke the sleepers, and
return'd;

Then tending her rough lord, tho' all
unask'd,

In silence, did him service as a squire;

Till issuing arm'd he found the host
and cried,
'Thy reckoning, friend?' and ere he
learnt it, 'Take
Five horses and their armors;' and the
host,
Suddenly honest, answer'd in amaze,
'My lord, I scarce have spent the worth
of one!'
'Ye will be all the wealthier,' said the
prince,
And then to Enid, 'Forward! and to-
day
I charge you, Enid, more especially,
What thing soever ye may hear, or
see,
Or fancy — tho' I count it of small use
To charge you — that ye speak not but
obey.'

And Enid answer'd: 'Yea, my lord,
I know
Your wish and would obey; but, rid-
ing first,
I hear the violent threats you do not
hear,
I see the danger which you cannot see.
Then not to give you warning, that
seems hard,
Almost beyond me; yet I would obey.'

'Yea so,' said he, 'do it; be not too
wise,
Seeing that ye are wedded to a man,
Not all mismated with a yawning
clown,
But one with arms to guard his head
and yours,
With eyes to find you outhowever far,
And ears to hear you even in his
dreams.'

With that he turn'd and look'd as
keenly at her
As careful robins eye the delver's toil;
And that within her which a wanton
fool
Or hasty judger would have call'd her
guilt
Made her cheek burn and either eyelid
fall.
And Geraint look'd and was not satis-
fied.

Then forward by a way which,
beaten broad,

Led from the territory of false Limours
To the waste earldom of another earl,
Doorm, whom his shaking vassals
call'd the Bull,
Went Enid with her sullen follower
on.
Once she look'd back, and when she
saw him ride
More near by many a rood than yester-
morn,
It wellnigh made her cheerful; till
Geraint,
Waving an angry hand as who should
say,
'Ye watch me,' sadden'd all her heart
again.
But while the sun yet beat a dewy
blade,
The sound of many a heavily-galloping
hoof
Smote on her ear, and turning round
she saw
Dust, and the points of lances bicker
in it.
Then, not to disobey her lord's behest,
And yet to give him warning, for he
rode
As if he heard not, moving back she
held
Her finger up, and pointed to the dust.
At which the warrior in his obstinacy,
Because she kept the letter of his word,
Was in a manner pleased, and turning
stood.
And in the moment after, wild Li-
mours,
Borne on a black horse, like a thunder-
cloud
Whose skirts are loosen'd by the break-
ing storm,
Half ridden off with by the thing he
rode,
And all in passion uttering a dry shriek,
Dash'd on Geraint, who closed with
him, and bore
Down by the length of lance and arm
beyond
The crupper, and so left him stunn'd
or dead,
And overthrew the next that follow'd
him,
And blindly rush'd on all the rout be-
hind.
But at the flash and motion of the man
They vanish'd panic-stricken, like a
shoal

Of darting fish, that on a summer morn
Adown the crystal dykes at Camelot
Come slipping o'er their shadows on
the sand, ⁴⁷¹

But if a man who stands upon the brink
But lift a shining hand against the sun,
There is not left the twinkle of a fin
Betwixt the cressy islets white in
flower ;

So, scared but at the motion of the
man,

Fled all the boon companions of the
earl,

And left him lying in the public way ;
So vanish friendships only made in
wine.

Then like a stormy sunlight smiled
Geraint, ⁴⁸⁰

Who saw the chargers of the two
that fell

Start from their fallen lords and wildly
fly,

Mixt with the flyers. 'Horse and
man,' he said,

'All of one mind and all right-honest
friends !

Not a hoof left ! and I methinks till
now

Was honest—paid with horses and
with arms ;

I cannot steal or plunder, no, nor beg.
And so what say ye, shall we strip

him there,
Your lover ? has your palfrey heart

enough
To bear his armor ? shall we fast or

dine ? ⁴⁹⁰
No ?—then do thou, being right hon-

est, pray
That we may meet the horsemen of

Earl Doorm ;
I too would still be honest.' Thus he

said ;
And sadly gazing on her bridle-reins,

And answering not one word, she led
the way.

But as a man to whom a dreadful
loss

Falls in a far land and he knows it
not,

But coming back he learns it, and the
loss

So pains him that he sickens nigh to
death ;

So fared it with Geraint, who, being
prick'd ⁵⁰⁰

In combat with the follower of Li-
mours,

Bled underneath his armor secretly,
And so rode on, nor told his gentle

wife
What ail'd him, hardly knowing it
himself,

Till his eye darken'd and his helmet
wagg'd ;

And at a sudden swerving of the road,
Tho' happily down on a bank of

grass,
The prince, without a word, from his

horse fell.

And Enid heard the clashing of his
fall,

Suddenly came, and at his side all
pale ⁵¹⁰

Dismounting loosed the fastenings of
his arms,

Nor let her true hand falter, nor blue
eye

Moisten, till she had lighted on his
wound,

And tearing off her veil of faded silk
Had bared her forehead to the blister-

ing sun,
And swathed the hurt that drain'd her
dear lord's life.

Then, after all was done that hand
could do,

She rested, and her desolation came
Upon her, and she wept beside the

way.

And many past, but none regarded
her, ⁵²⁰

For in that realm of lawless turbu-
lence

A woman weeping for her murder'd
mate

Was cared as much for as a summer
shower.

One took him for a victim of Earl
Doorm,

Nor dared to waste a perilous pity on
him.

Another hurrying past, a man-at-arms,
Rode on a mission to the bandit earl ;

Half whistling and half singing a
coarse song,

He drove the dust against her veillless
eyes.

Another, flying from the wrath of
Doorm ⁵³⁰
Before an ever-fancied arrow, made
The long way smoke beneath him in
his fear ;
At which her palfrey whinnying lifted
heel,
And scour'd into the coppices and was
lost,
While the great charger stood, grieved
like a man.

But at the point of noon the huge
Earl Doorm,
Broad-faced with under-fringe of rus-
set beard,
Bound on a foray, rolling eyes of
prey,
Came riding with a hundred lances
up ;
But ere he came, like one that hails a
ship, ⁵⁴⁰
Cried out with a big voice, 'What, is
he dead ?'
'No, no, not dead !' she answer'd in
all haste.
'Would some of your kind people
take him up,
And bear him hence out of this cruel
sun ?
Most sure am I, quite sure, he is not
dead.'

Then said Earl Doorm : 'Well, if
he be not dead,
Why wail ye for him thus ? ye seem
a child.
And be he dead, I count you for a
fool ;
Your wailing will not quicken him :
dead or not,
Ye mar a comely face with idiot tears.
Yet, since the face *is* comely — some
of you, ⁵⁵¹
Here, take him up, and bear him to
our hall.
An if he live, we will have him of our
band ;
And if he die, why earth has earth
enough
To hide him. See ye take the charger
too,
A noble one.'

He spake and past away,
But left two brawny spearmen, who
advanced,

Each growling like a dog, when his
good bone
Seems to be pluck'd at by the village
boys
Who love to vex him eating, and he
fears ⁵⁶⁰
To lose his bone, and lays his foot
upon it,
Gnawing and growling ; so the ruffians
growl'd,
Fearing to lose, and all for a dead
man,
Their chance of booty from the morn-
ing's raid,
Yet raised and laid him on a litte-
bier,
Such as they brought upon their
forays out
For those that might be wounded ;
laid him on it
All in the hollow of his shield, and
took
And bore him to the naked hall of
Doorm —
His gentle charger following him un-
led — ⁵⁷⁰
And cast him and the bier in which
he lay
Down on an oaken settle in the hall,
And then departed, hot in haste to
join
Their luckier mates, but growling as
before,
And cursing their lost time, and the
dead man,
And their own earl, and their own
souls, and her.
They might as well have blest her ;
she was deaf
To blessing or to cursing save from
one.

So for long hours sat Enid by her
lord
There in the naked hall, propping his
head, ⁵⁸⁰
And chafing his pale hands, and call-
ing to him,
Till at the last he waken'd from his
swoon,
And found his own dear bride prop-
ping his head,
And chafing his faint hands, and call-
ing to him ;
And felt the warm tears falling on his
face.

And said to his own heart, 'She weeps
for me;'
And yet lay still, and feign'd himself
as dead,
That he might prove her to the utter-
most,
And say to his own heart, 'She weeps
for me.'

But in the falling afternoon re-
turn'd ⁵⁹⁰
The huge Earl Doorm with plunder
to the hall.

His lusty spearmen follow'd him with
noise:

Each hurling down a heap of things
that rang

Against the pavement, cast his lance
aside,

And doff'd his helm; and then there
flutter'd in,

Half-bold, half-frighted, with dilated
eyes,

A tribe of women, dress'd in many
hues,

And mingled with the spearmen;
and Earl Doorm

Struck with a knife's haft hard against
the board,

And call'd for flesh and wine to feed
his spears. ⁶⁰⁰

And men brought in whole hogs and
quarter beeves,

And all the hall was dim with steam
of flesh.

And none spake word, but all sat
down at once,

And ate with tumult in the naked
hall,

Feeding like horses when you hear
them feed;

Till Enid shrank far back into herself,
To shun the wild ways of the lawless
tribe.

But when Earl Doorm had eaten all
he would,

He roll'd his eyes about the hall, and
found

A damsel drooping in a corner of it.
Then he remember'd her and how she
wept, ⁶¹¹

And out of her there came a power
upon him;

And rising on the sudden he said:
'Eat!

I never yet beheld a thing so pale.

God's curse, it makes me mad to see
you weep.

Eat! Look yourself. Good luck had
your good man,

For were I dead who is it would weep
for me?

Sweet lady, never since I first drew
breath

Have I beheld a lily like yourself.

And so there lived some color in your
cheek, ⁶²⁰

There is not one among my gentle-
women

Were fit to wear your slipper for a
glove.

But listen to me, and by me be
ruled,

And I will do the thing I have not
done,

For ye shall share my earldom with
me, girl,

And we will live like two birds in one
nest,

And I will fetch you forage from all
fields,

For I compel all creatures to my will.'

He spoke; the brawny spearman let
his cheek

Bulge with the unswallow'd piece,
and turning stared; ⁶³⁰

While some, whose souls the old ser-
pent long had drawn

Down, as the worm draws in the
wither'd leaf

And makes it earth, hiss'd each at
other's ear

What shall not be recorded—women
they,

Women, or what had been those gra-
cious things,

But now desired the humbling of
their best,

Yea, would have help'd him to it;
and all at once

They hated her, who took no thought
of them,

But answer'd in low voice, her meek
head yet

Drooping, 'I pray you of your cour-
tesy, ⁶⁴⁰

He being as he is, to let me be.'

She spake so low he hardly heard
her speak,

But like a mighty patron, satisfied

With what himself had done so graciously,
Assumed that she had thank'd him,
adding, 'Yea,
Eat and be glad, for I account you
mine.'

She answer'd meekly, 'How should
I be glad
Henceforth in all the world at any-
thing,
Until my lord arise and look upon
me?'

Here the huge earl cried out upon
her talk, ⁶⁵⁰
As all but empty heart and weariness
And sickly nothing; suddenly seized
on her,
And bare her by main violence to the
board,
And thrust the dish before her, cry-
ing, 'Eat.'

'No, no,' said Enid, next, 'I will
not eat
Till yonder man upon the bier arise,
And eat with me.' 'Drink, then,' he
answer'd. 'Here!'—
And fill'd a horn with wine and held
it to her,—
'Lo! I, myself, when flush'd with
fight or hot,
God's curse, with anger—often I my-
self, ⁶⁶⁰
Before I well have drunken, scarce
can eat;
Drink therefore, and the wine will
change your will.'

'Not so,' she cried, 'by Heaven, I
will not drink
Till my dear lord arise and bid me do
it,
And drink with me; and if he rise no
more,
I will not look at wine until I die.'

At this he turn'd all red and paced
his hall,
Now gnaw'd his under, now his upper
lip,
And coming up close to her, said at
last:
'Girl, for I see ye scorn my courtesies,

Take warning; yonder man is surely
dead, ⁶⁷¹
And I compel all creatures to my will.
Not eat nor drink? And wherefore
wait for one
Who put your beauty to this flout
and scorn
By dressing it in rags? Amazed am I,
Beholding how ye butt against my
wish,
That I forbear you thus; cross me no
more.
At least put off to please me this poor
gown,
This silken rag, this beggar-woman's
weed.
I love that beauty should go beauti-
fully; ⁶⁸⁰
For see ye not my gentlewomen here,
How gay, how suited to the house of
one
Who loves that beauty should go
beautifully?
Rise therefore; robe yourself in this;
obey.'

He spoke, and one among his gen-
tlewomen
Display'd a splendid silk of foreign
loom,
Where like a shoaling sea the lovely
blue
Play'd into green, and thicker down
the front
With jewels than the sward with
drops of dew,
When all night long a cloud clings to
the hill, ⁶⁹⁰
And with the dawn ascending lets the
day
Strike where it clung; so thickly
shone the gems.

But Enid answer'd, harder to be
moved
Than hardest tyrants in their day of
power,
With lifelong injuries burning una-
venged,
And now their hour has come; and
Enid said:

'In this poor gown my dear lord
found me first,
And loved me serving in my father's
hall;

In this poor gown I rode with him to court,
 And there the Queen array'd me like the sun;
 In this poor gown he bade me clothe myself,
 When now we rode upon this fatal quest
 Of honor, where no honor can be gain'd;
 And this poor gown I will not cast aside
 Until himself arise a living man,
 And bid me cast it. I have griefs enough;
 Pray you be gentle, pray you let me be.
 I never loved, can never love but him.
 Yea, God, I pray you of your gentleness,
 He being as he is, to let me be.' 710

Then strode the brute earl up and down his hall,
 And took his russet beard between his teeth;
 Last, coming up quite close, and in his mood
 Crying, 'I count it of no more avail,
 Dame, to be gentle than ungentle with you;
 Take my salute,' unknighly with flat hand,
 However lightly, smote her on the cheek.

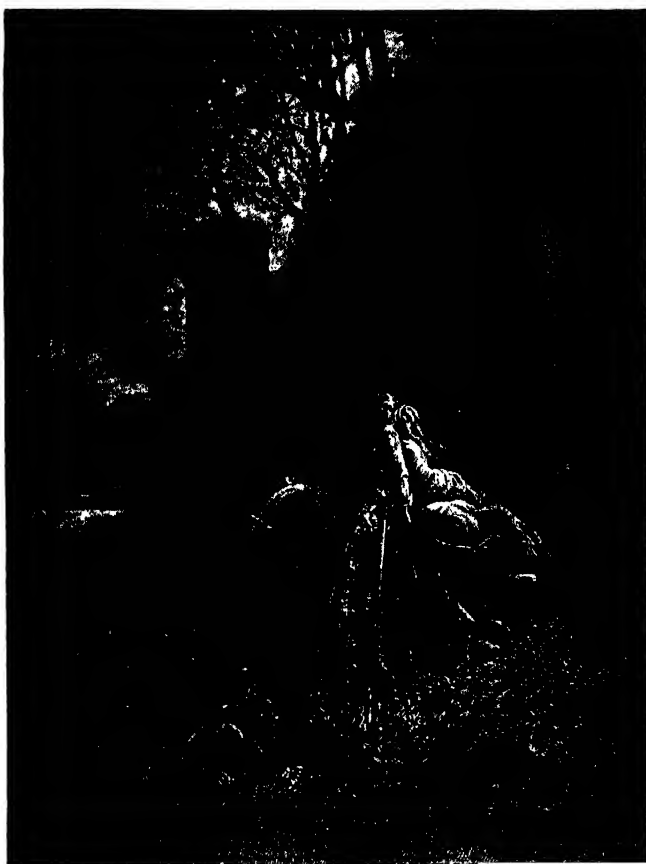
Then Enid, in her utter helplessness,
 And since she thought, 'He had not dared to do it,
 Except he surely knew my lord was dead,' 720
 Sent forth a sudden sharp and bitter cry,
 As of a wild thing taken in the trap,
 Which sees the trapper coming thro' the wood.

This heard Geraint, and grasping at his sword, —
 It lay beside him in the hollow shield, —
 Made but a single bound, and with a sweep of it
 Shore thro' the swarthy neck, and like a ball
 The russet-bearded head roll'd on the floor.

So died Earl Doorm by him he counted dead.
 And all the men and women in the hall
 Rose when they saw the dead man rise, and fled 731
 Yelling as from a spectre, and the two
 Were left alone together, and he said:

'Enid, I have used you worse than that dead man,
 Done you more wrong; we both have undergone
 That trouble which has left me thrice your own.
 Henceforward I will rather die than doubt.
 And here I lay this penance on myself,
 Not, tho' mine own ears heard you yesternorn —
 You thought me sleeping, but I heard you say, 740
 I heard you say, that you were no true wife,
 I swear I will not ask your meaning in it.
 I do believe yourself against yourself,
 And will henceforward rather die than doubt.'

And Enid could not say one tender word,
 She felt so blunt and stupid at the heart.
 She only pray'd him, 'Fly, they will return
 And slay you; fly, your charger is without,
 My palfrey lost.' 'Then, Enid, shall you ride
 Behind me.' 'Yea,' said Enid, 'let us go.' 750
 And moving out they found the stately horse,
 Who now no more a vassal to the thief,
 But free to stretch his limbs in lawful fight,
 Neigh'd with all gladness as they came, and stoop'd
 With a low whinny toward the pair; and she
 Kiss'd the white star upon his noble front,
 Glad also; then Geraint upon the horse
 Mounted, and reach'd a hand, and on his foot



'He turn'd his face
And kiss'd her climbing'

She set her own and climb'd; he
turn'd his face
And kiss'd her climbing, and she cast
her arms
About him, and at once they rode ⁷⁶⁰
away.

And never yet, since high in Para-
dise
O'er the four rivers the first roses blew,
Dance purer pleasure unto mortal kind

Than lived thro' her who in that peril
ous hour
Put hand to hand beneath her hus-
band's heart,
And felt him hers again. She did not
weep,
But o'er her meek eyes came a happy
mist
Like that which kept the heart of
Eden green
Before the useful trouble of the rain.

Yet not so misty were her meek blue
 eyes 771
 As not to see before them on the
 path,
 Right in the gateway of the bandit
 hold,
 A knight of Arthur's court, who laid
 his lance
 In rest and made as if to fall upon him.
 Then, fearing for his hurt and loss of
 blood,
 She, with her mind all full of what
 had chanced,
 Shriek'd to the stranger, 'Slay not a
 dead man!'
 'The voice of Enid,' said the knight;
 but she,
 Beholding it was Edyrn, son of Nudd,
 Was moved so much the more, and
 shriek'd again, 781
 'O cousin, slay not him who gave you
 life.'
 And Edyrn moving frankly forward
 spake:
 'My lord Geraint, I greet you with all
 love;
 I took you for a bandit knight of
 Doorm;
 And fear not, Enid, I should fall upon
 him,
 Who love you, prince, with something
 of the love
 Wherewith we love the Heaven that
 chastens us.
 For once, when I was up so high in
 pride
 That I was halfway down the slope
 to hell, 790
 By overthrowing me you threw me
 higher.
 Now, made a knight of Arthur's Table
 Round,
 And since I knew this earl when I
 myself
 Was half a bandit in my lawless hour,
 I come the mouthpiece of our King to
 Doorm —
 The King is close behind me — bidding
 him
 Disband himself, and scatter all his
 powers,
 Submit, and hear the judgment of the
 King.'
 'He hears the judgment of the King
 of kings.'

Cried the wan prince; 'and lo, the
 powers of Doorm 800
 Are scatter'd!' and he pointed to the
 field,
 Where, huddled here and there on
 mound and knoll,
 Were men and women staring and
 aghast,
 While some yet fled; and then he
 plainlier told
 How the huge earl lay slain within his
 hall.
 But when the knight besought him,
 'Follow me,
 Prince, to the camp, and in the King's
 own ear
 Speak what has chanced; ye surely
 have endured
 Strange chances here alone;' that
 other flush'd,
 And hung his head, and halted in
 reply, 810
 Fearing the mild face of the blameless
 King.
 And after madness acted question
 ask'd;
 Till Edyrn crying, 'If ye will not go
 To Arthur, then will Arthur come to
 you,'
 'Enough,' he said, 'I follow,' and
 they went.
 But Enid in their going had two fears,
 One from the bandit scatter'd in the
 field,
 And one from Edyrn. Every now
 and then,
 When Edyrn rein'd his charger at her
 side,
 She shrank a little. In a hollow land,
 From which old fires have broken,
 men may fear 821
 Fresh fire and ruin. He, perceiving,
 said:
 'Fair and dear cousin, you that
 most had cause
 To fear me, fear no longer, I am
 changed.
 Yourself were first the blameless cause
 to make
 My nature's prideful sparkle in the
 blood
 Break into furious flame; being re-
 pulsed
 By Yniol and yourself, I schemed and
 wrought

Until I overturn'd him ; then set up —
With one main purpose ever at my
heart — 830

My haughty jousts, and took a para-
mour ;

Did her mock-honor as the fairest fair,
And, toppling over all antagonism,
So wax'd in pride that I believed my-
self

Unconquerable, for I was wellnigh
mad ;

And, but for my main purpose in these
jousts,

I should have slain your father, seized
yourself.

I lived in hope that sometime you
would come

To these my lists with him whom best
you loved,

And there, poor cousin, with your
meek blue eyes, 840

The truest eyes that ever answer'd
heaven,

Behold me overturn and trample on
him.

Then, had you cried, or knelt, or
pray'd to me,

I should not less have kill'd him. And
you came, —

But once you came, — and with your
own true eyes

Beheld the man you loved — I speak
as one

Speaks of a service done him — over-
throw

My proud self, and my purpose three
years old,

And set his foot upon me, and give
me life.

There was I broken down, there was
I saved ; 850

Tho' thence I rode all-shamed, hating
the life

He gave me, meaning to be rid of it.
And all the penance the Queen laid
upon me

Was but to rest awhile within her
court ;

Where first as sullen as a beast new-
caged,

And waiting to be treated like a wolf,
Because I knew my deeds were known,

I found,
Instead of scornful pity or pure

scorn,
Such fine reserve and noble reticence,

Manners so kind, yet stately, such a
grace 860

Of tenderest courtesy, that I began
To glance behind me at my former

life,
And find that it had been the wolf's
indeed.

And oft I talk'd with Dubric, the high
saint,

Who, with mild heat of holy oratory,
Subdued me somewhat to that gentle

ness
Which, when it weds with manhood,
makes a man.

And you were often there about the
Queen,

But saw me not, or mark'd not if you
saw ;

Nor did I care or dare to speak with
you, 870

But kept myself aloof till I was
changed ;

And fear not, cousin, I am changed
indeed.

He spoke, and Enid easily believed,
Like simple noble natures, credulous

Of what they long for, good in friend
or foe,

There most in those who most have
done them ill.

And when they reach'd the camp the
King himself

Advanced to greet them, and behold-
ing her

Tho' pale, yet happy, ask'd her not a
word,

But went apart with Edyrn, whom he
held 880

In converse for a little, and return'd,
And, gravely smiling, lifted her from

horse,
And kiss'd her with all pureness, bro-
ther-like,

And show'd an empty tent allotted her,
And glancing for a minute, till he saw
her

Pass into it, turn'd to the prince, and
said :

'Prince, when of late ye pray'd me
for my leave

To move to your own land and there
defend

Your marches, I was prick'd with
some reproof,

As one that let foul wrong stagnate
 and be, ⁸⁹⁰
 By having look'd too much thro' alien
 eyes,
 And wrought too long with delegated
 hands,
 Not used mine own; but now behold
 me come
 To cleanse this common sewer of all
 my realm,
 With Edyrn and with others. Have
 ye look'd
 At Edyrn? have ye seen how nobly
 changed?
 This work of his is great and wonder-
 ful.
 His very face with change of heart is
 changed.
 The world will not believe a man re-
 pents;
 And this wise world of ours is mainly
 right. ⁹⁰⁰
 Full seldom doth a man repent, or use
 Both grace and will to pick the vicious
 quitch
 Of blood and custom wholly out of
 him,
 And make all clean, and plant himself
 afresh,
 Edyrn has done it, weeding all his
 heart
 As I will weed this land before I go.
 I, therefore, made him of our Table
 Round,
 Not rashly, but have proved him
 every way
 One of our noblest, our most valorous,
 Sanest and most obedient; and indeed
 This work of Edyrn, wrought upon
 himself ⁹¹¹
 After a life of violence, seems to me
 A thousand-fold more great and won-
 derful
 Than if some knight of mine, risking
 his life,
 My subject with my subjects under
 him,
 Should make an onslaught single on a
 realm
 Of robbers, tho' he slew them one by
 one,
 And were himself nigh wounded to
 the death.
 So spake the King; low bow'd the
 prince, and felt

His work was neither great nor won-
 derful, ⁹²⁰
 And past to Enid's tent; and thither
 came
 The King's own leech to look into his
 hurt;
 And Enid tended on him there; and
 there
 Her constant motion round him, and
 the breath
 Of her sweet tendance hovering over
 him,
 Fill'd all the genial courses of his
 blood
 With deeper and with ever deeper
 love,
 As the Southwest that blowing Bala
 lake
 Fills all the sacred Dec. So past the
 days.
 But while Geraint lay healing of
 his hurt, ⁹³⁰
 The blameless King went forth and
 cast his eyes
 On each of all whom Uther left in
 charge
 Long since, to guard the justice of the
 King.
 He look'd and found them wanting;
 and as now
 Men weed the White Horse on the
 Berkshire hills,
 To keep him bright and clean as here-
 tofore,
 He rooted out the slothful officer
 Or guilty, which for bribe had wink'd
 at wrong,
 And in their chairs set up a stronger
 race
 With hearts and hands, and sent a
 thousand men ⁹⁴⁰
 To till the wastes, and moving every-
 where
 Clear'd the dark places and let in the
 law,
 And broke the bandit holds and
 cleansed the land.
 Then, when Geraint was whole
 again, they past
 With Arthur to Caerleon upon Usk.
 There the great Queen once more em-
 braced her friend,
 And clothed her in apparel like the
 day.

And tho' Geraint could never take
again
That comfort from their converse
which he took
Before the Queen's fair name was
breathed upon, ⁹⁵⁰
He rested well content that all was
well.
Thence after tarrying for a space they
rode,
And fifty knights rode with them to
the shores
Of Severn, and they past to their own
land.
And there he kept the justice of the
King
So vigorously yet mildly that all
hearts
Applauded, and the spiteful whisper
died;
And being ever foremost in the chase,
And victor at the tilt and tournament,
They call'd him the great prince and
man of men. ⁹⁶⁰
But Enid, whom her ladies loved to
call
Enid the Fair, a grateful people
named
Enid the Good; and in their halls
arose
The cry of children, Enids and Ge-
raints
Of times to be; nor did he doubt her
more,
But rested in her fealty till he crown'd
A happy life with a fair death, and
fell
Against the heathen of the Northern
Sea
In battle, fighting for the blameless
King.

BALIN AND BALAN

PELLAM the king, who held and lost
with Lot
In that first war, and had his realm
restored
But render'd tributary, fail'd of late
To send his tribute; wherefore Arthur
call'd
His treasurer, one of many years, and
spake:
'Go thou with him and him and bring
it to us,

Lest we should set one truer on his
throne.
Man's word is God in man.'

His baron said:
'We go, but harken: there be two
strange knights
Who sit near Camelot at a fountain
side ¹⁰
A mile beneath the forest, challeng-
ing
And overthrowing every knight whc
comes.
Wilt thou I undertake them as we
pass,
And send them to thee?'

Arthur laugh'd upon him:
'Old friend, too old to be so young,
depart,
Delay not thou for aught, but let them
sit,
Until they find a lustier than them-
selves.'

So these departed. Early, one fai:
dawn,
The light-wing'd spirit of his youth
return'd
On Arthur's heart; he arm'd himself
and went, ²⁰
So coming to the fountain-side be-
held
Balin and Balan sitting statue-like,
Brethren, to right and left the spring,
that down,
From underneath a plume of lady-
fern,
Sang, and the sand danced at the bot-
tom of it.
And on the right of Balin Balin's
horse
Was fast beside an alder, on the
left
Of Balan Balan's near a poplar-tree.
'Fair sirs,' said Arthur, 'wherefore
sit ye here?'
Balin and Balan answer'd: 'For the
sake ³⁰
Of glory; we be mightier men than
all
In Arthur's court; that also have we
proved,
For whatsoever knight against us
came
Or I or he have easily overthrown.'

'I too,' said Arthur, 'am of Arthur's hall,
But rather proven in his Paynim wars
Than famous jousts; but see, or
proven or not,
Whether me likewise ye can over-
throw.'
And Arthur lightly smote the brethren
down,
And lightly so return'd, and no man
knew. 40

Then Balin rose, and Balan, and be-
side
The carolling water set themselves
again,
And spake no word until the shadow
turn'd;
When from the fringe of coppice
round them burst
A spangled pursuivant, and crying,
'Sirs,
Rise, follow! ye be sent for by the
King,'
They follow'd; whom when Arthur
seeing ask'd,
'Tell me your names; why sat ye by
the well?'
Balin the stillness of a minute broke
saying, 'An unmelodious name to
thee, 50
Balin, "the Savage" — that addition
thine —
My brother and my better, this man
here,
Balan. I smote upon the naked skull
A thrall of thine in open hall; my
hand
Was gauntleted, half slew him, for I
heard
He had spoken evil of me; thy just
wrath
Sent me a three-years' exile from
thine eyes.
I have not lived my life delight-
somerly;
For I that did that violence to thy
thrall,
Had often wrought some fury on my-
self, 60
Saving for Balan. Those three king-
less years
Have past — were wormwood-bitter
to me. King,
Methought that if we sat beside the
well,

And hurl'd to ground what knight so-
ever spur'd
Against us, thou would'st take me
gladlier back,
And make, as ten times worthier to be
thine
Than twenty Balins, Balan knight. I
have said.
Not so — not all. A man of thine to-
day
Abash'd us both, and brake my boast.
'Thy will?'
Said Arthur: 'Thou hast ever spoken
truth; 70
Thy too fierce manhood would not let
thee lie.
Rise, my true knight. As children
learn, be thou
Wiser for falling! walk with me, and
move
To music with thine Order and the
King.
Thy chair, a grief to all the brethren,
stands
Vacant, but thou retake it, mine
again!'

Thereafter, when Sir Balin enter'd
hall,
The lost one found was greeted as in
heaven
With joy that blazed itself in wood-
land wealth
Of leaf, and gayest garlandage of
flowers, 80
Along the walls and down the board;
they sat,
And cup clash'd cup; they drank,
and some one sang,
Sweet-voiced, a song of welcome,
whereupon
Their common shout in chorus, mount-
ing, made
Those banners of twelve battles over-
head
Stir as they stirr'd of old, when Ar-
thur's host
Proclaim'd him victor and the day
was won.

Then Balan added to their Order
lived
A wealthier life than heretofore with
these
And Balin, till their embassy re-
turn'd. 90

'Sir King,' they brought report,
 'we hardly found,
 So bush'd about it is with gloom, the
 hall
 Of him to whom ye sent us, Pellam,
 once
 A Christless foe of thine as ever dash'd
 Horse against horse; but seeing that
 thy realm
 Hath prosper'd in the name of Christ,
 the King
 Took, as in rival heat, to holy things,
 And finds himself descended from the
 Saint
 Arimathæan Joseph, him who first
 Brought the great faith to Britain over
 seas. 100
 He boasts his life as purer than thine
 own;
 Eats scarce enow to keep his pulse
 a-beat;
 Hath push'd aside his faithful wife,
 nor lets
 Or dame or damsel enter at his gates
 Lest he should be polluted. This gray
 king
 Show'd us a shrine wherein were won-
 ders—yea,
 Rich arks with priceless bones of mar-
 tyrdom,
 Thorns of the crown and shivers of
 the cross,
 And therewithal,—for thus he told
 us,—brought
 By holy Joseph hither, that same spear
 Wherewith the Roman pierced the side
 of Christ. 111
 He much amazed us; after, when we
 sought
 The tribute, answer'd, "I have quite
 foregone
 All matters of this world. Garlon,
 mine heir,
 Of him demand it," which this Garlon
 gave
 With much ado, railing at thine and
 thee.

'But when we left, in those deep
 woods we found
 A knight of thine spear-stricken from
 behind,
 Dead, whom we buried; more than
 one of us
 Cried out on Garlon, but a woodman
 there 120

Reported of some demon in the woods
 Was once a man, who, driven by evil
 tongues
 From all his fellows, lived alone, and
 came
 To learn black magic, and to hate his
 kind
 With such a hate that when he died
 his soul
 Became a fiend, which, as the man in
 life
 Was wounded by blind tongues he saw
 not whence,
 Strikes from behind. This woodman
 show'd the cave
 From which he sallies and wherein he
 dwelt.
 We saw the hoof-print of a horse, no
 more.' 130

Then Arthur, 'Let who goes before
 me see
 He do not fall behind me. Foully slain
 And villainously! who will hunt for
 me
 This demon of the woods?' Said
 Balan, 'I!'
 So claim'd the quest and rode away,
 but first,
 Embracing Balin: 'Good my brother,
 hear!
 Let not thy moods prevail when I am
 gone
 Who used to lay them! hold them
 outer fiends,
 Who leap at thee to tear thee; shake
 them aside,
 Dreams ruling when wit sleeps! yea,
 but to dream 140
 That any of these would wrong thee
 wrongs thyself.
 Witness their flowery welcome. Bound
 are they
 To speak no evil. Truly, save for
 fears,
 My fears for thee, so rich a fellowship
 Would make me wholly blest; thou
 one of them,
 Be one indeed. Consider them, and all
 Their bearing in their common bond
 of love,
 No more of hatred than in heaven itself,
 No more of jealousy than in Paradise.'

So Balan warn'd, and went; Balin
 remain'd, 150

Who — for but three brief moons had
glanced away
From being knighted till he smote the
thrall,
And faded from the presence into years
Of exile — now would strictlier set
himself
To learn what Arthur meant by cour-
tesy,
Manhood, and knighthood; wherefore
hover'd round
Lancelot, but when he mark'd his high
sweet smile
In passing, and a transitory word
Make knight or churl or child or
damsel seem
From being smiled at happier in them-
selves —¹⁶⁰
Sigh'd, as a boy, lame-born beneath a
height
That glooms his valley, sighs to see
the peak
Sun-flush'd or touch at night the north-
ern star;
For one from out his village lately
climb'd
And brought report of azure lands and
fair,
Far seen to left and right; and he
himself
Hath hardly scaled with help a hun-
dred feet
Up from the base. So Balin, marvel-
ling oft
How far beyond him Lancelot seem'd
to move,
Groan'd, and at times would mutter:
'These be gifts,¹⁷⁰
Born with the blood, not learnable,
divine,
Beyond my reach. Well had I
foughten — well —
In those fierce wars, struck hard —
and had I crown'd
With my slain self the heaps of whom
I slew —
So — better! — But this worship of the
Queen,
That honor too wherein she holds him
— this,
This was the sunshine that hath given
the man
A growth, a name that branches o'er
the rest,
And strength against all odds, and
what the King

So prizes — overprizes — gentleness.
Her likewise would I worship an I
might.¹⁸¹
I never can be close with her, as he
That brought her hither. Shall I pray
the King
To let me bear some token of his Queen
Whereon to gaze, remembering her —
forget
My heats and violences? live afresh?
What if the Queen disdain'd to grant
it! nay,
Being so stately-gentle, would she
make
My darkness blackness? and with how
sweet grace
She greeted my return! Bold will I
be —¹⁹⁰
Some goodly cognizance of Guinevere,
In lieu of this rough beast upon my
shield,
Langued gules, and tooth'd with grin-
ning savagery.'

And Arthur, when Sir Balin sought
him, said,
'What wilt thou bear?' Balin was
bold, and ask'd
To bear her own crown-royal upon
shield,
Whereat she smiled and turn'd her to
the King,
Who answer'd: 'Thou shalt put the
crown to use.
The crown is but the shadow of the
king,
And this a shadow's shadow, let him
have it,²⁰⁰
So this will help him of his violences!'
'No shadow,' said Sir Balin, 'O my
Queen,
But light to me! no shadow, O my
King,
But golden earnest of a gentler life!'

So Balin bare the crown, and all the
knights
Approved him, and the Queen; and all
the world
Made music, and he felt his being
move
In music with his Order and the King.

The nightingale, full-toned in mid-
dle May,
Hath ever and anon a note so thin²¹⁰

It seems another voice in other groves ;
 Thus, after some quick burst of sudden wrath,
 The music in him seem'd to change
 and grow
 Faint and far-off.

And once he saw the thrall
 His passion half had gauntleted to death,
 That causer of his banishment and shame,
 Smile at him, as he deem'd, presumptuously.
 His arm half rose to strike again, but fell ;
 The memory of that cognizance on shield
 Weighted it down, but in himself he moan'd : 220

'Too high this mount of Camelot for me ;
 These high-set courtesies are not for me.
 Shall I not rather prove the worse for these ?
 Frier and stormier from restraining, break
 Into some madness even before the Queen ?'

Thus, as a hearth lit in a mountain home,
 And glancing on the window, when the gloom
 Of twilight deepens round it, seems a flame
 That rages in the woodland far below,
 So when his moods were darken'd, court and king 230
 And all the kindly warmth of Arthur's hall
 Shadow'd an angry distance ; yet he strove
 To learn the graces of their Table, fought
 Hard with himself, and seem'd at length in peace.

Then chanced, one morning, that Sir Balin sat
 Close-bower'd in that garden nigh the hall.
 A walk of roses ran from door to door,
 A walk of lilies crost it to the bower ;

And down that range of roses the great Queen

Came with slow steps, the morning on her face ; 240

And all in shadow from the counter door

Sir Lancelot as to meet her, then at once,

As if he saw not, glanced aside, and paced

The long white walk of lilies toward the bower.

Follow'd the Queen ; Sir Balin heard her ' Prince,

Art thou so little loyal to thy Queen As pass without good morrow to thy Queen ?'

To whom Sir Lancelot with his eyes on earth,

'Fain would I still be loyal to the Queen.'

'Yea, so,' she said ; 'but so to pass me by — 250

So loyal scarce is loyal to thyself, Whom all men rate the king of courtesy.

Let be ; ye stand, fair lord, as in a dream.'

Then Lancelot with his hand among the flowers :

'Yea — for a dream. Last night methought I saw

That maiden Saint who stands with lily in hand

In yonder shrine. All round her prest the dark,

And all the light upon her silver face

Flow'd from the spiritual lily that she held.

Lo ! these her emblems drew mine eyes — away ; 260

For see, how perfect-pure ! As light a flush

As hardly tints the blossom of the quince

Would mar their charm of stainless maidenhood.'

'Sweeter to me,' she said, 'this garden rose

Deep-hued and many-folded ! sweeter still

The wild-wood hyacinth and the bloom of May !

Prince, we have ridden before among
the flowers
In those fair days — not all as cool as
these,
Tho' season-earlier. Art thou sad? or
sick?
Our noble King will send thee his own
leech —
Sick? or for any matter anger'd at
me?' ²⁷⁰

Then Lancelot lifted his large eyes;
they dwelt
Deep-tranced on hers, and could not
fall. Her hue
Changed at his gaze; so turning side
by side
They past, and Balin started from his
bower.

'Queen? subject? but I see not
what I see.
Damsel and lover? hear not what I
hear.
My father hath begotten me in his
wrath.
I suffer from the things before me,
know,
Learn nothing; am not worthy to be
knight —
A churl, a clown!' and in him gloom ²⁸⁰
on gloom
Deepen'd; he sharply caught his
lance and shield,
Nor stay'd to crave permission of the
King,
But mad for strange adventure, dash'd
away.

He took the selfsame track as Balin,
^{saw}
The fountain where they sat together,
sigh'd,
'Was I not better there with him?'
and rode
The skyless woods, but under open
blue
Came on the hoar-head woodman at a
bough
Wearily hewing. 'Churl, thine axe!'
he cried, ²⁹⁰
Descended, and disjointed it at a blow;
To whom the woodman utter'd wonder-
ingly,
'Lord, thou couldst lay the devil of
these woods

If arm of flesh could lay him!' Balin
cried,
'Him, or the viler devil who plays his
part;
To lay that devil would lay the devil
in me.'
'Nay,' said the churl, 'our devil is a
truth,
I saw the flash of him but yester-even.
And some *do* say that our Sir Garlon
too
Hath learn'd black magic, and to ride
unseen. ³⁰⁰
Look to the cave.' But Balin answer'd
him,
'Old fabler, these be fancies of the
churl;
Look to thy woodcraft,' and so leaving
him,
Now with slack rein and careless of
himself,
Now with dug spur and raving at him-
self,
Now with droopt brow down the long
glades he rode;
So mark'd not on his right a cavern-
chasm
Yawn over darkness, where, nor far
within,
The whole day died, but, dying,
gleam'd on rocks
Roof-pendent, sharp; and others from
the floor, ³¹⁰
Tusklike, arising, made that mouth of
night
Whereout the demon issued up from
hell.
He mark'd not this, but, blind and
deaf to all
Save that chain'd rage which ever
yept within,
Past eastward from the falling sun.
At once
He felt the hollow-beaten mosses thud
And tremble, and then the shadow of
a spear,
Shot from behind him, ran along the
ground.
Sideways he started from the path,
and saw,
With pointed lance as if to pierce, a
shape, ³²⁰
A light of armor by him flash, and
pass
And vanish in the woods; and follow'd
this,

But all so blind in rage that unawares
 He burst his lance against a forest
 bough,
 Dishorsed himself, and rose again, and
 fled
 Far, till the castle of a king, the hall
 Of Pellam, lichen-bearded, grayly
 draped
 With streaming grass, appear'd, low-
 built but strong;
 The ruinous donjon as a knoll of moss,
 The battlement overtopt with ivy-
 tods,
 A home of bats, in every tower an owl.³³⁰

Then spake the men of Pellam cry-
 ing, 'Lord,
 Why wear ye this crown-royal upon
 shield?'
 Said Balin, 'For the fairest and the
 best
 Of ladies living gave me this to bear.'
 So stall'd his horse, and strode across
 the court,
 But found the greetings both of knight
 and king
 Faint in the low dark hall of banquet.
 Leaves
 Laid their green faces flat against the
 panes,
 Sprays grated, and the canker'd
 boughs without
 Whined in the wood; for all was
 hush'd within,³⁴⁰
 Till when at feast Sir Garlon likewise
 ask'd,
 'Why wear ye that crown-royal?'
 Balin said,
 'The Queen we worship, Lancelot, I,
 and all,
 As fairest, best, and purest, granted
 me
 To bear it!' Such a sound — for
 Arthur's knights
 Were hated strangers in the hall — as
 makes
 The white swan-mother, sitting, when
 she hears
 A strange knee rustle thro' her secret
 reeds,
 Made Garlon, hissing; then he sourly
 smiled:³⁵⁰
 'Fairest I grant her — I have seen;
 but best,
 Best, purest? *thou* from Arthur's hall.
 and yet

So simple! hast thou eyes, or if, are
 these

So far besotted that they fail to see
 This fair wife-worship cloaks a secret
 shame?

Truly, ye men of Arthur be but babes.'

A goblet on the board by Balin,
 boss'd

With holy Joseph's legend, on his
 right

Stood, all of massiest bronze. One
 side had sea

And ship and sail and angels blowing
 on it;³⁶⁰

And one was rough with wattling, and
 the walls

Of that low church he built at Glaston-
 bury.

This Balin graspt, but while in act to
 hurl,

Thro' memory of that token on the
 shield

Relax'd his hold. 'I will be gentle,'
 he thought,

'And passing gentle;' caught his
 hand away,

Then fiercely to Sir Garlon: 'Eyes
 have I

That saw to-day the shadow of a spear,
 Shot from behind me, run along the
 ground;

Eyes too that long have watch'd how
 Lancelot draws³⁷⁰

From homage to the best and purest,
 might,

Name, manhood, and a grace, but
 scantly thine

Who, sitting in thine own hall, canst
 endure

To mouth so huge a foulness — to thy
 guest,

Me, me of Arthur's Table. Felon talk!
 Let be! no more!

But not the less by night
 The scorn of Garlon, poisoning all his
 rest,

Stung him in dreams. At length, and
 dim thro' leaves

Blinkt the white morn, sprays grated,
 and old boughs

Whined in the wood. He rose, de-
 scended, met³⁸⁰

The scorner in the castle court, and
 fain,

For hate and loathing, would have
 past him by ;
 But when Sir Garlon utter'd mocking-
 wise,
 'What, wear ye still that same crown-
 scandalous ?'
 His countenance blacken'd, and his
 forehead veins
 Bloated and branch'd ; and tearing out
 of sheath
 The brand, Sir Balin with a fiery, 'Ha !
 So thou be shadow, here I make thee
 ghost,'
 Hard upon helm smote him, and the
 blade flew
 Splintering in six, and clinkt upon the
 stones. ³⁹⁰
 Then Garlon, reeling slowly back-
 ward, fell,
 And Balin by the banneret of his helm
 Dragg'd him, and struck, but from
 the castle a cry
 Sounded across the court, and — men-
 at-arms,
 A score with pointed lances, making
 at him —
 He dash'd the pummel at the foremost
 face,
 Beneath a low door dipt, and made
 his feet
 Wings thro' a glimmering gallery, till
 he mark'd
 The portal of King Pellam's chapel
 wide
 And inward to the wall ; he stept be-
 hind ; ⁴⁰⁰
 Thence in a moment heard them pass
 like wolves
 Howling ; but while he stared about
 the shrine,
 In which he scarce could spy the
 Christ for Saints,
 Beheld before a golden altar lie
 The longest lance his eyes had ever
 seen,
 Point-painted red ; and seizing there-
 upon
 Push'd thro' an open casement down,
 lean'd on it,
 Leapt in a semicircle, and lit on earth ;
 Then hand at ear, and harkening from
 what side
 The blindfold rummage buried in the
 walls ⁴¹⁰
 Might echo, ran the counter path, and
 found

His charger, mounted on him and
 away.
 An arrow whizz'd to the right, one to
 the left,
 One overhead ; and Pellam's feeble cry,
 'Stay, stay him ! he defileth heavenly
 things
 With earthly uses !' made him quickly
 dive
 Beneath the boughs, and race thro'
 many a mile
 Of dense and open, till his goodly
 horse,
 Arising wearily at a fallen oak,
 Stumbled headlong, and cast him face
 to ground. ⁴²⁰

Half-wroth he had not ended, but
 all glad,
 Knightlike, to find his charger yet un-
 lamed,
 Sir Balin drew the shield from off his
 neck,
 Stared at the priceless cognizance, and
 thought,
 'I have shamed thee so that now thou
 shamest me,
 Thee will I bear no more,' high on a
 branch
 Hung it, and turn'd aside into the
 woods,
 And there in gloom cast himself all
 along,
 Moaning, 'My violences, my vio-
 lences !'

But now the wholesome music of
 the wood ⁴³⁰
 Was dumb'd by one from out the hall
 of Mark,
 A damsel-errant, warbling, as she
 rode
 The woodland alleys, Vivien, with her
 squire.

'The fire of heaven has kill'd the barren
 cold,
 And kindled all the plain and all the wold.
 The new leaf ever pushes off the old.
 The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell.

'Old priest, who mumble worship in
 your quire —
 Old monk and nun, ye scorn the world's
 desire,
 Yet in your frosty cells ye feel the fire ! ⁴⁴⁰
 The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell.'

'The fire of heaven is on the dusty ways.
The wayside blossoms open to the blaze.
The whole wood-world is one full peal of
praise.
The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell.

'The fire of heaven is lord of all things
good,
And starve not thou this fire within thy
blood,
But follow Vivien thro' the fiery flood!
The fire of heaven is not the flame of hell!'

Then turning to her squire, 'This
fire of heaven, ⁴⁵⁰
This old sun-worship, boy, will rise
again,
And beat the Cross to earth, and break
the King
And all his Table.'

Then they reach'd a glade,
Where under one long lane of cloud-
less air
Before another wood, the royal crown
Sparkled, and swaying upon a restless
elm
Drew the vague glance of Vivien and
her squire.
Amazed were these; 'Lo there,' she
cried — 'a crown —
Borne by some high lord-prince of Ar-
thur's hall,
And there a horse! the rider? where
is he? ⁴⁶⁰
See, yonder lies one dead within the
wood.
Not dead; he stirs! — but sleeping. I
will speak.
Hail, royal knight, we break on thy
sweet rest,
Not, doubtless, all unearn'd by noble
deeds.
But bounden art thou, if from Ar-
thur's hall,
To help the weak. Behold, I fly from
shame,
A lustful king, who sought to win my
love
Thro' evil ways. The knight with
whom I rode
Hath suffer'd misadventure, and my
squire
Hath in him small defence; but thou,
Sir Prince, ⁴⁷⁰
Wilt surely guide me to the warrior
King,

Arthur the blameless, pure as any
maid,
To get me shelter for my maidenhood.
I charge thee by that crown upon thy
shield,
And by the great Queen's name, arise
and hence.'

And Balin rose: 'Thither no more
nor prince
Nor knight am I, but one that hath
defamed
The cognizance she gave me. Here I
dwell
Savage among the savage woods, here
die —
Die — let the wolves' black maws en-
sepulchre ⁴⁸⁰
Their brother beast, whose anger was
his lord!
O me, that such a name as Guinevere's,
Which our high Lancelot hath so lifted
up,
And been thereby uplifted, should
thro' me,
My violence, and my villainy, come to
shame!'

Thereat she suddenly laugh'd and
shrill, anon
Sigh'd all as suddenly. Said Balin to
her:
'Is this thy courtesy — to mock me,
ha?
Hence, for I will not with thee.' Again
she sigh'd:
'Pardon, sweet lord! we maidens
often laugh ⁴⁹⁰
When sick at heart, when rather we
should weep.
I knew thee wrong'd. I brake upon
thy rest,
And now full loth am I to break thy
dream,
But thou art man, and canst abide a
truth,
Tho' bitter. Hither, boy — and mark
me well.
Dost thou remember at Caerleon
once —
A year ago — nay, then I love thee
not —
Ay, thou rememberest well — one
summer dawn —
By the great tower — Caerleon upon
Usk —

Nay, truly we were hidden — this fair
 lord,⁵⁰⁰
 The flower of all their vestal knight-
 hood, knelt
 In amorous homage — knelt — what
 else? — O, ay,
 Knelt, and drew down from out his
 nightblack hair
 And mumbled that white hand whose
 ring'd caress
 Had wander'd from her own King's
 golden head,
 And lost itself in darkness, till she
 cried —
 I thought the great tower would crash
 down on both —
 "Rise, my sweet King, and kiss me
 on the lips,
 Thou art my King." This lad, whose
 lightest word
 Is mere white truth in simple naked-
 ness,⁵¹⁰
 Saw them embrace; he reddens, can-
 not speak,
 So bashful, he! but all the maiden
 Saints,
 The deathless mother-maidenhood of
 heaven,
 Cry out upon her. Up then, ride
 with me!
 Talk not of shame! thou canst not,
 an thou wouldst,
 Do these more shame than these have
 done themselves.'

She lied with ease; but horror-
 stricken he,
 Remembering that dark bower at
 Camelot,
 Breathed in a dismal whisper, 'It is
 truth.'

Sunnily she smiled: 'And even in
 this lone wood,⁵²⁰
 Sweet lord, ye do right well to whis-
 per this.
 Fools prate, and perish traitors.
 Woods have tongues,
 As walls have ears; but thou shalt
 go with me,
 And we will speak at first exceeding
 low.
 Meet is it the good King be not de-
 ceived.
 See now, I set thee high on vantage
 ground,

From whence to watch the time, and
 eagle-like
 Stoop at thy will on Lancelot and the
 Queen.'

She ceased; his evil spirit upon
 him leapt,
 He ground his teeth together, sprang
 with a yell,⁵³⁰
 Tore from the branch and cast on
 earth the shield,
 Drove his mail'd heel athwart the
 royal crown,
 Stamp'd all into defacement, hurl'd it
 from him
 Among the forest weeds, and cursed
 the tale,
 The told-of, and the teller.

That weird yell,
 Unearthlier than all shriek of bird or
 beast,
 Thrill'd thro' the woods; and Balan
 lurking there —
 His quest was unaccomplish'd — heard
 and thought
 'The scream of that wood-devil I
 came to quell!'
 Then nearing: 'Lo! he hath slain
 some brother-knight,⁵⁴⁰
 And tramples on the goodly shield to
 show
 His loathing of our Order and the
 Queen.
 My quest, meseems, is here. Or devil
 or man,
 Guard thou thine head.' Sir Balan
 spake not a word,
 But snatch'd a sudden buckler from
 the squire,
 And vaulted on his horse, and so they
 crash'd
 In onset, and King Pellam's holy spear,
 Reputed to be red with sinless blood,
 Redden'd at once with sinful, for the
 point
 Across the maiden shield of Balan
 prick'd⁵⁵⁰
 The hauberk to the flesh; and Balin's
 horse
 Was wearied to the death, and, when
 they clash'd,
 Rolling back upon Balin, crush'd the
 man
 Inward, and either fell and swoon'd
 away.

Then to her squire mutter'd the
damsel: 'Fools!
This fellow hath wrought some foul-
ness with his Queen;
Else never had he borne her crown,
nor raved
And thus foam'd over at a rival name.
But thou, Sir Chick, that scarce hast
broken shell,
Art yet half-yolk, not even come to
down — ⁵⁶⁰
Who never sawest Caerleon upon
Usk —
And yet hast often pleaded for my
love —
See what I see, be thou where I have
been,
Or else, Sir Chick — dismount and
loose their casques;
I fain would know what manner of
men they be.'
And when the squire had loosed them,
'Goodly! — look!
They might have cropt the myriad
flower of May,
And butt each other here, like brain-
less bulls,
Dead for one heifer!'

Then the gentle squire:
'I hold them happy, so they died for
love; ⁵⁷⁰
And, Vivien, tho' ye beat me like
your dog,
I too could die, as now I live, for
thee.'

'Live on, Sir Boy,' she cried; 'I
better prize
The living dog than the dead lion.
Away!
I cannot brook to gaze upon the dead.'
Then leapt her palfrey o'er the fallen
oak,
And bounding forward, 'Leave them
to the wolves.'

But when their foreheads felt the
cooling air,
Balin first woke, and seeing that true
face,
Familiar up from cradle-time, so wan,
Crawl'd slowly with low moans to
where he lay, ⁵⁸¹
And on his dying brother cast him-
self

Dying; and he lifted faint eyes; he
felt
One near him; all at once they found
the world,
Staring wild-wide; then with a child-
like wail,
And drawing down the dim disastrous
brow
That o'er him hung, he kiss'd it,
moan'd, and spake:

'O Balin, Balin, I that fain had
died
To save thy life, have brought thee to
thy death.
Why had ye not the shield I knew?
and why ⁵⁹⁰
Trampled ye thus on that which bare
the crown?'

Then Balin told him brokenly and
in gasps
All that had chanced, and Balan
moan'd again:

'Brother, I dwelt a day in Pellam's
hall;
This Garlon mock'd me, but I heeded
not.
And one said, "Eat in peace! a liar
is he,
And hates thee for the tribute!"
This good knight
Told me that twice a wanton damsel
came,
And sought for Garlon at the castle-
gates,
Whom Pellam drove away with holy
heat. ⁶⁰⁰
I well believe this damsel, and the
one
Who stood beside thee even now, the
same.
"She dwells among the woods," he
said, "and meets
And dallies with him in the Mouth of
Hell."
Foul are their lives, foul are their
lips; they lied.
Pure as our own true mother is our
Queen.'

'O brother,' answer'd Balin, 'woe
is me!
My madness all thy life has been thy
doom,

Thy curse, and darken'd all thy day ;
 and now
 The night has come. I scarce can
 see thee now. ⁶¹⁰
 Good night ! for we shall never bid
 again
 Good morrow — Dark my doom was
 here, and dark
 It will be there. I see thee now no
 more.
 I would not mine again should darken
 thine ;
 Good night, true brother.'

Balan answer'd low,
 'Good night, true brother, here ! good
 morrow there !
 We two were born together, and we
 die
 Together by one doom : ' and while
 he spoke
 Closed his death-drowsing eyes, and
 slept the sleep
 With Balin, either lock'd in either's
 arm. ⁶²⁰

MERLIN AND VIVIEN

A STORM was coming, but the winds
 were still,
 And in the wild woods of Broceliande,
 Before an oak, so hollow, huge, and
 old
 It look'd a tower of ivied masonwork,
 At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay.

For he that always bare in bitter
 grudge
 The slights of Arthur and his Table,
 Mark
 The Cornish King, had heard a wan-
 dering voice,
 A minstrel of Caerleon by strong
 storm
 Blown into shelter at Tintagil, say ¹⁰
 That out of naked knight-like purity
 Sir Lancelot worshipt no unmarried
 girl,
 But the great Queen herself, fought
 in her name,
 ' Sware by her — vows like theirs that
 high in heaven
 Love most, but neither marry nor are
 given
 In marriage, angels of our Lord's re-
 port.

He ceased, and then — for Vivien
 sweetly said —
 She sat beside the banquet nearest
 Mark, —
 'And is the fair example follow'd, sir,
 In Arthur's household ? ' — answer'd
 innocently : — ²⁰

'Ay, by some few — ay, truly —
 youths that hold
 It more beseems the perfect virgin
 knight
 To worship woman as true wife be-
 yond
 All hopes of gaining, than as maiden
 girl.
 They place their pride in Lancelot
 and the Queen.
 So passionate for an utter purity
 Beyond the limit of their bond are
 these,
 For Arthur bound them not to single-
 ness.
 Brave hearts and clean ! and yet —
 God guide them ! — young.'

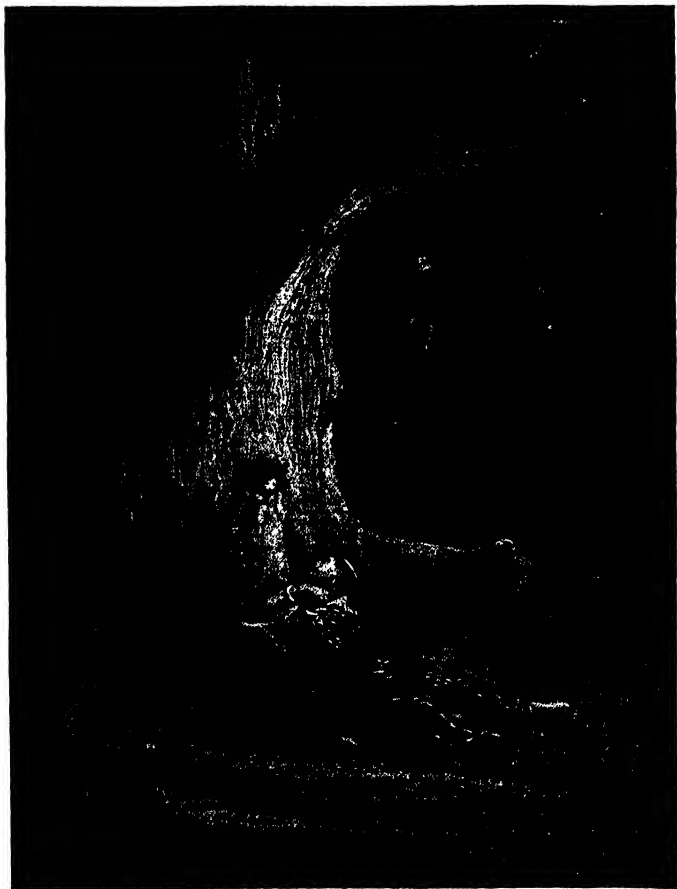
Then Mark was half in heart to
 hurl his cup ³⁰
 Straight at the speaker, but forbore.
 He rose
 To leave the hall, and, Vivien follow-
 ing him,
 Turn'd to her : 'Here are snakes within
 the grass ;
 And you methinks, O Vivien, save ye
 fear
 The monkish manhood, and the mask
 of pure
 Worn by this court, can stir them till
 they sting.'

And Vivien answer'd, smiling scorn-
 fully :
 'Why fear ? because that foster'd at
 thy court
 I savor of thy — virtues ? fear them ?
 no,
 As love, if love be perfect, casts out
 fear, ⁴⁰
 So hate, if hate be perfect, casts out
 fear.
 My father died in battle against the
 King,
 My mother on his corpse in open field ;
 She bore me there, for born from
 death was I

Among the dead and sown upon the
wind —
And then on thee! and shown the
truth betimes,
That old true filth, and bottom of the
well,
Where Truth is hidden. Gracious
lessons thine,
And maxims of the mud! "This
Arthur pure!
Great Nature thro' the flesh herself
hath made

50

Gives him the lie! There is no being
pure,
My cherub; saith not Holy Writ the
same?" —
If I were Arthur, I would have thy
blood.
Thy blessing, stainless King! I bring
thee back,
When I have ferreted out their bur-
rowings,
The hearts of all this Order in mine
hand —



'At Merlin's feet the wily Vivien lay'

Ay — so that fate and craft and folly
close,
Perchance, one curl of Arthur's golden
beard.
To me this narrow grizzled fork of
thine
Is cleaner-fashion'd — Well, I loved
thee first; 60
That warps the wit.'

Loud laugh'd the graceless Mark.
But Vivien, into Camelot stealing,
lodged
Low in the city, and on a festal
day
When Guinevere was crossing the
great hall
Cast herself down, knelt to the Queen,
and wail'd.

'Why kneel ye there? What evil
have ye wrought?
Rise!' and the damsel bidden rise
arose
And stood with folded hands and
downward eyes
Of glancing corner and all meekly
said:
'None wrought, but suffer'd much,
an orphan maid! 70
My father died in battle for thy King,
My mother on his corpse — in open
field,
The sad sea-sounding wastes of Lyon-
nesse —
Poor wretch — no friend! — and now
by Mark the king,
For that small charm of feature mine,
pursued —
If any such be mine — I fly to thee.
Save, save me thou! Woman of wo-
men — thine
The wreath of beauty, thine the crown
of power,
Be thine the balm of pity, O heaven's
own white
Earth-angel, stainless bride of stainless
King — 80
Help, for he follows! take me to thy-
self!
O yield me shelter for mine innocence
Among thy maidens!'

Here her slow sweet eyes
Fear-tremulous, but humbly hopeful,
rose

Fixt on her hearer's, while the Queen
who stood
All glittering like May sunshine on
May leaves
In green and gold, and plumed with
green, replied:
'Peace, child! of over-praise and over-
blame
We choose the last. Our noble Arthur,
him
Ye scarce can overpraise, will hear
and know. 90
Nay — we believe all evil of thy
Mark —
Well, we shall test thee farther; but
this hour
We ride a-hawking with Sir Lancelot.
He hath given us a fair falcon which
he train'd;
We go to prove it. Bide ye here the
while.'

She past; and Vivien murmur'd
after, 'Go!
I bide the while.' Then thro' the
portal-arch
Peering askance, and muttering bro-
ken-wise,
As one that labors with an evil dream,
Beheld the Queen and Lancelot get to
horse. 100

'Is that the Lancelot? goodly — ay,
but gaunt;
Courteous — amends for gauntness —
takes her hand —
That glance of theirs, but for the
street, had been
A clinging kiss — how hand lingers in
hand!
Let go at last! — they ride away — to
hawk
For waterfowl. Royaller game is
mine.
For such a supersensual sensual bond
As that gray cricket chirpt of at our
hearth —
Touch flax with flame — a glance will
serve — the liars!
Ah little rat that borest in the dyke 110
Thy hole by night to let the boundless
deep
Down upon far-off cities while they
dance —
Or dream — of thee they dream'd not
— nor of me

These—ay, but each of either; ride,
and dream
The mortal dream that never yet was
mine—
Ride, ride and dream until ye wake—
to me!
Then, narrow court and lubber King,
farewell!
For Lancelot will be gracious to the
rat,
And our wise Queen, if knowing that
I know,
Will hate, loathe, fear—but honor
me the more.' 120

Yet while they rode together down
the plain,
Their talk was all of training, terms
of art,
Diet and seeling, jesses, leash and lure.
'She is too noble,' he said, 'to check
at pies,
Nor will she rake: there is no baseness
in her.'
Here when the Queen demanded as
by chance,
'Know ye the stranger woman?' 'Let
her be,'
Said Lancelot, and unhooded casting
off
The goodly falcon free; she tower'd;
her bells,
Tone under tone, shrill'd; and they
lifted up 130
Their eager faces, wondering at the
strength,
Boldness, and royal knighthood of
the bird,
Who pounced her quarry and slew it.
Many a time
As once—of old—among the flowers
—they rode.

But Vivien half-forgotten of the
Queen
Among her damsels broidering sat,
heard, watch'd,
And whisper'd. Thro' the peaceful
court she crept
And whisper'd; then, as Arthur in
the highest
Leaven'd the world, so Vivien in the
lowest,
Arriving at a time of golden rest, 140
And sowing one ill hint from ear to
ear,

While all the heathen lay at Arthur's
feet,
And no quest came, but all was joust
and play,
Leaven'd his hall. They heard and
let her be.

Thereafter, as an enemy that has
left
Death in the living waters and with-
drawn,
The wily Vivien stole from Arthur's
court.

She hated all the knights, and heard
in thought
Their lavish comment when her name
was named.
For once, when Arthur walking all
alone, 150
Vext at a rumor issued from herself
Of some corruption crept among his
knights,
Had met her, Vivien, being greeted
fair,
Would fain have wrought upon his
cloudy mood
With reverent eyes mock-loyal, shaken
voice,
And flutter'd adoration, and at last
With dark sweet hints of some who
prized him more
Than who should prize him most; at
which the King
Had gazed upon her blankly and gone
by.
But one had watch'd, and had not
held his peace; 160
It made the laughter of an afternoon
That Vivien should attempt the
blameless King.
And after that, she set herself to gain
Him, the most famous man of all
those times,
Merlin, who knew the range of all
their arts,
Had built the King his havens, ships,
and halls,
Was also bard, and knew the starry
heavens;
The people call'd him wizard; whom
at first
She play'd about with slight and
sprightly talk,
And vivid smiles, and faintly-venom'd
points 170

Of slander, glancing here and grazing
 there;
 And yielding to his kindlier moods,
 the seer
 Would watch her at her petulance
 and play,
 Even when they seem'd unlovable,
 and laugh
 As those that watch a kitten. Thus
 he grew
 Tolerant of what he half disdain'd,
 and she,
 Perceiving that she was but half dis-
 dain'd,
 Began to break her sports with graver
 fits,
 Turn red or pale, would often when
 they met
 Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him
 With such a fixt devotion that the old
 man, 181
 Tho' doubtful, felt the flattery, and
 at times
 Would flatter his own wish in age for
 love,
 And half believe her true; for thus at
 times
 He waver'd, but that òther clung to
 him,
 Fixt in her will, and so the seasons
 went.

Then fell on Merlin a great melan-
 choly;
 He walk'd with dreams and darkness,
 and he found
 A doom that ever poised itself to fall,
 An ever-moaning battle in the mist,
 World-war of dying flesh against the
 life, 191
 Death in all life and lying in all love,
 The meanest having power upon the
 highest,
 And the high purpose broken by the
 worm.

So leaving Arthur's court he gain'd
 the beach,
 There found a little boat and stept
 into it;
 And Vivien follow'd, but he mark'd
 her not.
 She took the helm and he the sail;
 the boat
 Drave with a sudden wind across the
 deeps,

And, touching Breton sands, they dis-
 embark'd. 200
 And then she follow'd Merlin all the
 way,
 Even to the wild woods of Broceliande.
 For Merlin once had told her of a
 charm,
 The which if any wrought on any one
 With woven paces and with waving
 arms,
 The man so wrought on ever seem'd
 to lie
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow
 tower,
 From which was no escape for ever-
 more;
 And none could find that man for
 evermore,
 Nor could he see but him who wrought
 the charm 210
 Coming and going, and he lay as dead
 And lost to life and use and name and
 fame.
 And Vivien ever sought to work the
 charm
 Upon the great enchanter of the time,
 As fancying that her glory would be
 great
 According to his greatness whom she
 quench'd.

There lay she all her length and
 kiss'd his feet,
 As if in deepest reverence and in love.
 A twist of gold was round her hair; a
 robe
 Of samite without price, that more
 exprest 220
 Than hid her, clung about her lissome
 limbs,
 In color like the satin-shining palm
 On sallows in the windy gleams of
 March.
 And while she kiss'd them, crying,
 'Trample me,
 Dear feet, that I have follow'd thro'
 the world,
 And I will pay you worship; tread
 me down
 And I will kiss you for it;' he was
 mute.
 So dark a forethought roll'd about his
 brain,
 As on a dull day in an ocean cave.
 The blind wave feeling round his long
 sea-ball 230

In silence ; wherefore, when she lifted
 up
 A face of sad appeal, and spake and
 said,
 'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and again,
 'O Merlin, do ye love me?' and once
 more,
 'Great Master, do ye love me?' he
 was mute.
 And lissome Vivien, holding by his
 heel,
 Writhed toward him, slid up his
 knee and sat,
 Behind his ankle twined her hollow
 feet
 Together, curved an arm about his
 neck,
 Clung like a snake; and letting her
 left hand ²⁴⁰
 Droop from his mighty shoulder, as a
 leaf,
 Made with her right a comb of pearl
 to part
 The lists of such a beard as youth
 gone out
 Had left in ashes. Then he spoke and
 said,
 Not looking at her, 'Who are wise in
 love
 Love most, say least,' and Vivien an-
 swer'd quick :
 'I saw the little elf-god eyeless once
 In Arthur's arras hall at Camelot;
 But neither eyes nor tongue — O stupid
 child!
 Yet you are wise who say it; let me
 think ²⁵⁰
 Silence is wisdom. I am silent then,
 And ask no kiss;' then adding all at
 once,
 'And lo, I clothe myself with wis-
 dom,' drew
 The vast and shaggy mantle of his
 beard
 Across her neck and bosom to her
 knee,
 And call'd herself a gilded summer fly
 Caught in a great old tyrant spider's
 web,
 Who meant to eat her up in that wild
 wood
 Without one word. So Vivien call'd
 herself,
 But rather seem'd a lovely baleful star
 Veil'd in gray vapor; till he sadly
 smiled: ²⁶¹

'To what request for what strange
 boon,' he said,
 'Are these your pretty tricks and
 fooleries,
 O Vivien, the preamble? yet my
 thanks,
 For these have broken up my melan-
 choly.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling sau-
 cily :
 'What, O my Master, have ye found
 your voice?
 I bid the stranger welcome. Thanks
 at last!
 But yesterday you never open'd lip,
 Except indeed to drink. No cup had
 we; ²⁷⁰
 In mine own lady palms I cull'd the
 spring
 That gather'd trickling dropwise from
 the cleft,
 And made a pretty cup of both my
 hands
 And offer'd you it kneeling. Then
 you drank
 And knew no more, nor gave me one
 poor word;
 O, no more thanks than might a goat
 have given
 With no more sign of reverence than
 a beard.
 And when we halted at that other
 well,
 And I was faint to swooning, and
 you lay
 Foot-gilt with all the blossom-dust of
 those ²⁸⁰
 Deep meadows we had traversed, did
 you know
 That Vivien bathed your feet before
 her own?
 And yet no thanks; and all thro' this
 wild wood
 And all this morning when I fondled
 you.
 Boon, ay, there was a boon, one not
 so strange —
 How had I wrong'd you? surely ye
 are wise,
 But such a silence is more wise than
 kind.'

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers
 and said :
 'O, did ye never lie upon the shore,

And watch the curl'd white of the
 coming wave ²⁹⁰
 Glass'd in the slippery sand before it
 breaks?
 Even such a wave, but not so plea-
 surable,
 Dark in the glass of some presageful
 mood,
 Had I for three days seen, ready to
 fall.
 And then I rose and fled from Arthur's
 court
 To break the mood. You follow'd
 me unask'd;
 And when I look'd, and saw you fol-
 lowing still,
 My mind involved yourself the near-
 est thing
 In that mind-mist—for shall I tell
 you truth?
 You seem'd that wave about to break
 upon me ³⁰⁰
 And sweep me from my hold upon
 the world,
 My use and name and fame. Your
 pardon, child.
 Your pretty sports have brighten'd all
 again.
 And ask your boon, for boon I owe
 you thrice,
 Once for wrong done you by confusion,
 next
 For thanks it seems till now neglected,
 last
 For these your dainty gambols; where-
 fore ask,
 And take this boon so strange and not
 so strange.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling mourn-
 fully:
 'O, not so strange as my long asking
 it, ³¹⁰
 Not yet so strange as you yourself are
 strange,
 Nor half so strange as that dark mood
 of yours.
 I ever fear'd ye were not wholly mine;
 And see, yourself have own'd ye did
 me wrong.
 The people call you prophet; let it
 be;
 But not of those that can expound
 themselves.
 Take Vivien for expounder; she will
 call

That three-days-long presageful gloom
 of yours
 No presage, but the same mistrustful
 mood
 That makes you seem less noble than
 yourself, ³²⁰
 Whenever I have ask'd this very boon,
 Now ask'd again; for see you not,
 dear love,
 That such a mood as that which lately
 gloom'd
 Your fancy when ye saw me follow-
 ing you
 Must make me fear still more you are
 not mine,
 Must make me yearn still more to
 prove you mine,
 And make me wish still more to learn
 this charm
 Of woven paces and of waving hands,
 As proof of trust. O Merlin, teach it
 me!
 The charm so taught will charm us
 both to rest. ³³⁰
 For, grant me some slight power upon
 your fate,
 I, feeling that you felt me worthy
 trust,
 Should rest and let you rest, knowing
 you mine.
 And therefore be as great as ye are
 named,
 Not muffled round with selfish reti-
 cence.
 How hard you look and how deny-
 ingly!
 O, if you think this wickedness in me,
 That I should prove it on you un-
 awares,
 That makes me passing wrathful;
 then our bond
 Had best be loosed for ever; but
 think or not, ³⁴⁰
 By Heaven that hears, I tell you the
 clean truth,
 As clean as blood of babes, as white
 as milk!
 O Merlin, may this earth, if ever I,
 If these unwitty wandering wits of
 mine,
 Even in the jumbled rubbish of a
 dream,
 Have tript on such conjectural treach-
 ery—
 May this hard earth cleave to the
 nadir hell

Down, down, and close again and nip
 me flat,
 If I be such a traitress! Yield my
 boon,
 Till which I scarce can yield you all
 I am; 350
 And grant my re-reiterated wish,
 The great proof of your love; because
 I think,
 However wise, ye hardly know me
 yet.'

And Merlin loosed his hand from
 hers and said:
 'I never was less wise, however wise,
 Too curious Vivien, tho' you talk of
 trust,
 Than when I told you first of such a
 charm.
 Yea, if ye talk of trust I tell you this,
 Too much I trusted when I told you
 that,
 And stirr'd this vice in you which
 ruin'd man 360
 Thro' woman the first hour; for how-
 soe'er
 In children a great curiousness be
 well,
 Who have to learn themselves and all
 the world,
 In you, that are no child, for still I
 find
 Your face is practised when I spell
 the lines,
 I call it, — well, I will not call it
 vice;
 But since you name yourself the sum-
 mer fly,
 I well could wish a cobweb for the
 gnat
 That settles beaten back, and beaten
 back
 Settles, till one could yield for wear-
 ness. 370
 But since I will not yield to give you
 power
 Upon my life and use and name and
 fame,
 Why will ye never ask some other
 boon?
 Yea, by God's rood, I trusted you too
 much!'

And Vivien, like the tenderest-
 hearted maid
 That ever bided tryst at village stile,

Made answer, either eyelid wet with
 tears:

'Nay, Master, be not wrathful with
 your maid;
 Caress her, let her feel herself for-
 given
 Who feels no heart to ask another
 boon. 380
 I think ye hardly know the tender
 rhyme
 Of "trust me not at all or all in
 all."

I heard the great Sir Lancelot sing it
 once,
 And it shall answer for me. Listen
 to it.

"In love, if love be love, if love be
 ours,
 Faith and unfaith can ne'er be equal pow-
 ers:
 Unfaith in aught is want of faith in all.

"It is the little rift within the lute,
 That by and by will make the music mute,
 And ever widening slowly silence all. 390

"The little rift within the lover's lute,
 Or little pitted speck in garner'd fruit,
 That rotting inward slowly moulders all.

"It is not worth the keeping; let it go:
 But shall it? answer, darling, answer, no.
 And trust me not at all or all in all."

'O master, do ye love my tender
 rhyme?'

And Merlin look'd and half believed
 her true,
 So tender was her voice, so fair her
 face,
 So sweetly gleam'd her eyes behind
 her tears 400
 Like sunlight on the plain behind a
 shower;
 And yet he answer'd half indignantly:

'Far other was the song that once
 I heard
 By this huge oak, sung nearly where
 we sit;
 For here we met, some ten or twelve
 of us,
 To chase a creature that was current
 then
 In these wild woods, the hart with
 golden horns.

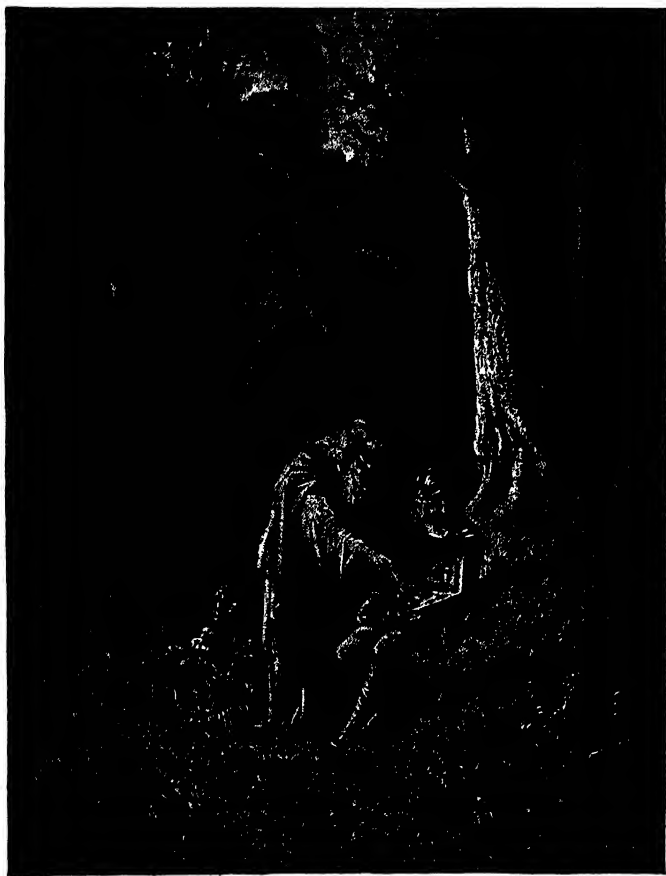
It was the time when first the question rose
 About the founding of a Table Round,
 That was to be, for love of God and men⁴¹⁰
 And noble deeds, the flower of all the world;
 And each incited each to noble deeds.
 And while we waited, one, the youngest of us,
 We could not keep him silent, out he flash'd,
 And into such a song, such fire for fame,
 Such trumpet-blowings in it, coming down
 To such a stern and iron-clashing close,
 That when he stopt we long'd to hurl together,
 And should have done it, but the beauteous beast
 Scared by the noise upstart'd at our feet,⁴²⁰
 And like a silver shadow slipt away
 Thro' the dim land. And all day long we rode
 Thro' the dim land against a rushing wind,
 That glorious roundel echoing in our ears,
 And chased the flashes of his golden horns
 Until they vanish'd by the fairy well
 That laughs at iron—as our warriors did—
 Where children cast their pins and nails, and cry
 "Laugh, little well!" but touch it with a sword,
 It buzzes fiercely round the point; and there⁴³⁰
 We lost him—such a noble song was that.
 But, Vivien, when you sang me that sweet rhyme,
 I felt as tho' you knew this cursed charm,
 Were proving it on me, and that I lay
 And felt them slowly ebbing, name and fame.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling mournfully:
 'O, mine have ebb'd away for evermore,

And all thro' following you to this wild wood,
 Because I saw you sad, to comfort you.
 Lo now, what hearts have men! they never mount⁴⁴⁰
 As high as woman in her selfless mood.
 And touching fame, howe'er ye scorn my song,
 Take one verse more—the lady speaks it—this:

' "My name, once mine, now thine, is closelier mine,
 For fame, could fame be mine, that fame were thine,
 And, shame, could shame be thine, that shame were mine.
 So trust me not at all or all in all."

' Says she not well? and there is more—this rhyme
 Is like the fair pearl-necklace of the Queen,
 That burst in dancing and the pearls were spilt;⁴⁵⁰
 Some lost, some stolen, some as relics kept;
 But nevermore the same two sister pearls
 Ran down the silken thread to kiss each other
 On her white neck—so is it with this rhyme.
 It lives dispersedly in many hands,
 And every minstrel sings it differently;
 Yet is there one true line, the pearl of pearls:
 "Man dreams of fame while woman wakes to love."
 Yea! love, tho' love were of the grossest, carves
 A portion from the solid present,⁴⁶⁰
 And uses, careless of the rest; but fame,
 The fame that follows death is nothing to us;
 And what is fame in life but half-disfame
 And counterchanged with darkness? ye yourself
 Know well that envy calls you devil's son,
 And since ye seem the master of all art,
 They fain would make you master of all vice.'



"I took his brush and blotted out the bird"

And Merlin lock'd his hand in hers
and said :
'I once was looking for a magic weed,
And found a fair young squire who
sat alone, 470
Had carved himself a knightly shield
of wood,
And then was painting on it fancied
arms,
Azure, an eagle rising or, the sun
In dexter chief; the scroll, "I follow
fame."

And speaking not, but leaning over
him,
I took his brush and blotted out the
bird,
And made a gardener putting in a
graff,
With this for motto, "Rather use than
fame."
You should have seen him blush; but
afterwards
He made a stalwart knight. O Vi-
vien, 480

For you, methinks you think you love
 me well ;
 For me, I love you somewhat. Rest ;
 and Love
 Should have some rest and pleasure in
 himself,
 Not ever be too curious for a boon,
 Too prurient for a proof against the
 grain
 Of him ye say ye love. But Fame
 with men,
 Being but ampler means to serve man-
 kind,
 Should have small rest or pleasure in
 herself,
 But work as vassal to the larger love
 That dwarfs the petty love of one to
 one. ⁴⁹⁰
 Use gave me fame at first, and fame
 again
 Increasing gave me use. Lo, there
 my boon !
 What other ? for men sought to prove
 me vile,
 Because I fain had given them greater
 wits ;
 And then did envy call me devil's
 son.
 The sick weak beast, seeking to help
 herself
 By striking at her better, miss'd, and
 brought
 Her own claw back, and wounded her
 own heart.
 Sweet were the days when I was all
 unknown,
 But when my name was lifted up the
 storm ⁵⁰⁰
 Brake on the mountain and I cared
 not for it.
 Right well know I that fame is half-
 disfame,
 Yet needs must work my work. That
 other fame,
 To one at least who hath not children
 vague,
 The cackle of the unborn about the
 grave,
 I cared not for it. A single misty
 star,
 Which is the second in a line of stars
 That seem a sword beneath a belt of
 three,
 I never gazed upon it but I dreamt
 Of some vast charm concluded in that
 star ⁵¹⁰

To make fame nothing. Wherefore,
 if I fear,
 Giving you power upon me thro' this
 charm,
 That you might play me falsely, hav-
 ing power,
 However well ye think ye love me
 now —
 As sons of kings loving in pupillage
 Have turn'd to tyrants when they
 came to power —
 I rather dread the loss of use than
 fame ;
 If you — and not so much from wicked-
 ness,
 As some wild turn of anger, or a
 mood
 Of overstrain'd affection, it may be, ⁵²⁰
 To keep me all to your own self, — or
 else
 A sudden spurt of woman's jealousy, —
 Should try this charm on whom ye say
 ye love.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling as in
 wrath :
 'Have I not sworn ? I am not trusted.
 Good !
 Well, hide it, hide it ; I shall find it
 out,
 And being found take heed of Vivien.
 A woman and not trusted, doubtless I
 Might feel some sudden turn of anger
 born
 Of your misfaith ; and your fine epi-
 thet ⁵³⁰
 Is accurate too, for this full love of
 mine
 Without the full heart back may merit
 well
 Your term of overstrain'd. So used
 as I,
 My daily wonder is, I love at all.
 And as to woman's jealousy, O, why
 not ?
 O, to what end, except a jealous one,
 And one to make me jealous if I
 love,
 Was this fair charm invented by your-
 self ?
 I well believe that all about this world
 Ye cage a buxom captive here and
 there, ⁵⁴⁰
 Closed in the four walls of a hollow
 tower
 From which is no escape for evermore.'

Then the great master merrily answered her :
 ' Full many a love in loving youth was mine ;
 I needed then no charm to keep them mine
 But youth and love ; and that full heart of yours
 Whereof ye prattle, may now assure you mine ;
 So live uncharm'd. For those who wrought it first,
 The wrist is parted from the hand that waved,
 The feet unmortised from their ankle-bones
 Who paced it, ages back — but will ye hear⁵⁵⁰
 The legend as in guerdon for your rhyme ?

' There lived a king in the most eastern East,
 Less old than I, yet older, for my blood
 Hath earnest in it of far springs to be.
 A tawny pirate anchor'd in his port,
 Whose bark had plunder'd twenty nameless isles ;
 And passing one, at the high peep of dawn,
 He saw two cities in a thousand boats
 All fighting for a woman on the sea.⁵⁶⁰
 And pushing his black craft among them all
 He lightly scatter'd theirs and brought her off,
 With loss of half his people arrow-slain ;
 A maid so smooth, so white, so wonderful,
 They said a light came from her when she moved.
 And since the pirate would not yield her up,
 The king impaled him for his piracy,
 Then made her queen. But those isle-nurtured eyes
 Waged such unwilling tho' successful war
 On all the youth, they sicken'd ; coun-
 cils thinn'd,⁵⁷⁰
 And armies waned, for magnet-like she drew
 The rustiest iron of old fighters' hearts ;

And beasts themselves would worship ;
 camels knelt
 Unbidden, and the brutes of mountain back
 That carry kings in castles bow'd black knees
 Of homage, ringing with their serpent hands,
 To make her smile, her golden ankle-bells.
 What wonder, being jealous, that he sent
 His horns of proclamation out thro' all
 The hundred under-kingdoms that he sway'd⁵⁸⁰
 To find a wizard who might teach the king
 Some charm which, being wrought upon the queen,
 Might keep her all his own. To such a one
 He promised more than ever king has given,
 A league of mountain full of golden mines,
 A province with a hundred miles of coast,
 A palace and a princess, all for him ;
 But on all those who tried and fail'd the king
 Pronounced a dismal sentence, meaning by it
 To keep the list low and pretenders back,⁵⁹⁰
 Or, like a king, not to be trifled with —
 Their heads should moulder on the city gates.
 And many tried and fail'd, because the charm
 Of nature in her overbore their own ;
 And many a wizard brow bleach'd on the walls,
 And many weeks a troop of carrion crows
 Hung like a cloud above the gateway towers.'

And Vivien breaking in upon him, said :
 ' I sit and gather honey ; yet, methinks,
 Thy tongue has tript a little ; ask thyself.⁶⁰⁰
 The lady never made *unwilling* war
 With those fine eyes ; she had her pleasure in it,

And made her good man jealous with
good cause.

And lived there neither dame nor dam-
sel then

Wrōth at a lover's loss? were all as
tame,

I mean, as noble, as their queen was
fair?

Not one to flirt a venom at her eyes,
Or pinch a murderous dust into her
drink,

Or make her paler with a poison'd
rose?

Well, those were not our days—but
did they find 610

A wizard? Tell me, was he like to
thee?

She ceased, and made her lithe arm
round his neck

Tighten, and then drew back, and let
her eyes

Speak for her, glowing on him, like a
bride's

On her new lord, her own, the first of
men.

He answer'd laughing: 'Nay, not
like to me.

At last they found—his foragers for
charms—

A little glassy-headed hairless man,
Who lived alone in a great wild on
grass,

Read but one book, and ever reading
grew 620

So grated down and filed away with
thought,

So lean his eyes were monstrous;
while the skin

Clung but to crate and basket, ribs
and spine.

And since he kept his mind on one sole
aim,

Nor ever touch'd fierce wine, nor
tasted flesh,

Nor own'd a sensual wish, to him the
wall

That sunders ghosts and shadow-cast-
ing men

Became a crystal, and he saw them
thro' it,

And heard their voices talk behind the
wall,

And learnt their elemental secrets,
powers 630

And forces; often o'er the sun's bright
eye

Drew the vast eyelid of an inky cloud,
And lash'd it at the base with slanting

storm;
Or in the noon of mist and driving

rain,
When the lake whiten'd and the pine-
wood roar'd,

And the cairn'd mountain was a shad-
ow, sunn'd

The world to peace again. Here was
the man;

And so by force they dragg'd him to
the king.

And then he taught the king to charm
the queen

In such-wise that no man could see
her more, 640

Nor saw she save the king, who
wrought the charm,

Coming and going, and she lay as
dead,

And lost all use of life. But when the
king

Made proffer of the league of golden
mines,

The province with a hundred miles of
coast,

The palace and the princess, that old
man

Went back to his old wild, and lived
on grass,

And vanish'd, and his book came
down to me.'

And Vivien answer'd smiling sau-
cily:

'Ye have the book; the charm is writ-
ten in it. 650

Good! take my counsel, let me know
it at once;

For keep it like a puzzle chest in chest,
With each chest lock'd and padlock'd

thirty-fold,

And whelm all this beneath as vast a
mound

As after furious battle turfs the slain
On some wild down above the windy

deep,
I yet should strike upon a sudden

means
To dig, pick, open, find and read the
charm:

Then, if I tried it, who should blame
me then?'

And smiling as a master smiles at
one ⁶⁶⁰
That is not of his school, nor any school
But that where blind and naked Ignorance
Delivers brawling judgments, un-
ashamed,
On all things all day long, he answer'd
her :

'Thou read the book, my pretty
Vivien !
O, ay, it is but twenty pages long,
But every page having an ample
marge,
And every marge enclosing in the midst
A square of text that looks a little blot,
The text no larger than the limbs of
fleas ; ⁶⁷⁰
And every square of text an awful
charm,
Writ in a language that has long gone
by,
So long that mountains have arisen
since
With cities on their flanks — thou read
the book !
And every margin scribbled, crost,
and cramm'd
With comment, densest condensation,
hard
To mind and eye ; but the long sleep-
less nights
Of my long life have made it easy to
me.
And none can read the text, not even I ;
And none can read the comment but
myself ; ⁶⁸⁰
And in the comment did I find the
charm.
O, the results are simple ; a mere child
Might use it to the harm of any one,
And never could undo it. Ask no
more ;
For tho' you should not prove it upon
me,
But keep that oath ye sware, ye
might, perchance,
Assay it on some one of the Table
Round,
And all because ye dream they babble
of you.'

And Vivien, frowning in true anger,
said :
'What dare the full-fed liars say of me ?

They ride abroad redressing human
wrongs ! ⁶⁹¹
They sit with knife in meat and wine
in horn.
They bound to holy vows of chastity !
Were I not woman, I could tell a
tale.
But you are man, you well can under-
stand
The shame that cannot be explain'd
for shame.
Not one of all the drove should touch
me — swine !'

Then answer'd Merlin careless of
her words :
' You breathe but accusation vast and
vague,
Spleen-born, I think, and proofless. If
ye know, ⁷⁰⁰
Set up the charge ye know, to stand
or fall !'

And Vivien answer'd frowning
wrathfully :
'O, ay, what say ye to Sir Valence,
him
Whose kinsman left him watcher o'er
his wife
And two fair babes, and went to dis-
tant lands,
Was one year gone, and on returning
found
Not two but three ? there lay the reck-
ling, one
But one hour old ! What said the
happy sire ?
A seven-months' babe had been a truer
gift.
Those twelve sweet moons confused
his fatherhood.' ⁷¹⁰

Then answer'd Merlin : 'Nay, I
know the tale.
Sir Valence wedded with an outland
dame ;
Some cause had kept him sunder'd
from his wife.
One child they had ; it lived with her ;
she died.
His kinsman travelling on his own af-
fair
Was charged by Valence to bring
home the child.
He brought, not found it therefore ;
take the truth.'

'O, ay,' said Vivien, 'over-true a tale!
 What say ye then to sweet Sir Sagramore,
 That ardent man? "To pluck the flower in season,"
 So says the song, "I trow it is no treason."
 O Master, shall we call him over-quick
 To crop his own sweet rose before the hour?'

And Merlin answer'd: 'Over-quick art thou
 To catch a loathly plume fallen from the wing
 Of that foul bird of rapine whose whole prey
 Is man's good name. He never wrong'd his bride.
 I know the tale. An angry gust of wind
 Puff'd out his torch among the myriad-room'd
 And many-corridor'd complexities⁷³⁰
 Of Arthur's palace. Then he found a door,
 And darning felt the sculptured ornament
 That wreathen round it made it seem his own,
 And wearied out made for the couch and slept,
 A stainless man beside a stainless maid;
 And either slept, nor knew of other there,
 Till the high dawn piercing the royal rose
 In Arthur's casement glimmer'd chastely down,
 Blushing upon them blushing, and at once
 He rose without a word and parted from her.
 But when the thing was blazed about the court,
 The brute world howling forced them into bonds,
 And as it chanced they are happy, being pure.'

'O, ay,' said Vivien, 'that were likely too!
 What say ye then to fair Sir Percivale

And of the horrid foulness that he wrought,
 The saintly youth, the spotless lamb of Christ,
 Or some black wether of Saint Satan's fold?
 What, in the precincts of the chapel-yard,
 Among the knightly brasses of the graves,
 And by the cold Hic Jacets of the dead!'

And Merlin answer'd careless of her charge:
 'A sober man is Percivale and pure,
 But once in life was fluster'd with new wine,
 Then paced for coolness in the chapel-yard,
 Where one of Satan's shepherdesses caught
 And meant to stamp him with her master's mark.
 And that he sinn'd is not believable;
 For, look upon his face! — but if he sinn'd,
 The sin that practice burns into the blood,
 And not the one dark hour which brings remorse,
 Will brand us, after, of whose fold we be;
 Or else were he, the holy king whose hymns
 Are chanted in the minster, worse than all.
 But is your spleen froth'd out, or have ye more?'

And Vivien answer'd frowning yet in wrath:
 'O, ay; what say ye to Sir Lancelot, friend,
 Traitor or true? that commerce with the Queen,
 I ask you, is it clamor'd by the child,
 Or whisper'd in the corner? do ye know it?'

To which he answer'd sadly: 'Yea, I know it.
 Sir Lancelot went ambassador, at first,
 To fetch her, and she watch'd him from her walls.

A rumor runs, she took him for the
King,
So fixt her fancy on him ; let them
be.
But have ye no one word of loyal
praise
For Arthur, blameless king and stain-
less man ?'

She answer'd with a low and chuc-
kling laugh :
'Man ! is he man at all, who knows
and winks ?
Sees what his fair bride is and does,
and winks ?' 780
By which the good King means to
blind himself,
And blinds himself and all the Table
Round
To all the foulness that they work.
Myself
Could call him — were it not for wo-
manhood —
The pretty, popular name such man-
hood earns,
Could call him the main cause of all
their crime,
Yea, were he not crown'd king, cow-
ard and fool.'

Then Merlin to his own heart, loath-
ing, said :
'O true and tender ! O my liege and
King !
O selfless man and stainless gentle-
man, 790
Who wouldst against thine own eye-
witness fain
Have all men true and leal, all women
pure !
How, in the mouths of base interpre-
ters,
From over-fineness not intelligible
To things with every sense as false
and foul
As the poach'd filth that floods the
middle street,
Is thy white blamelessness accounted
blame !'

But Vivien, deeming Merlin over-
borne
By instance, recommenced, and let
her tongue
Rage like a fire among the noblest
names, 800

Polluting, and imputing her whole
self,
Defaming and defacing, till she left
Not even Lancelot brave nor Galahad
clean.

Her words had issue other than she
will'd.
He dragg'd his eyebrow bushes down,
and made
A snowy pent-house for his hollow
eyes,
And mutter'd in himself : 'Tell *her*
the charm !
So, if she had it, would she rail on
me
To snare the next, and if she have it
not
So will she rail. What did the wan-
ton say ?' 810
"Not mount as high !" we scarce
can sink as low ;
For men at most differ as heaven and
earth,
But women, worst and best, as hea-
ven and hell.
I know the Table Round, my friends
of old ;
All brave, and many generous, and
some chaste.
She cloaks the scar of some repulse
with lies.
I well believe she tempted them and
fail'd,
Being so bitter ; for fine plots may
fail,
Tho' harlots paint their talk as well as
face
With colors of the heart that are not
theirs. 820
I will not let her know ; nine tithes of
times
Face-flatterer and backbiter are the
same.
And they, sweet soul, that most im-
pute a crime
Are prone to it, and impute them-
selves,
Wanting the mental range, or low de-
sire
Not to feel lowest makes them level
all ;
Yea, they would pare the mountain
to the plain,
To leave an equal baseness ; and in
this

Are harlots like the crowd that if they
 find
 Some stain or blemish in a name of
 note, 830
 Not grieving that their greatest are so
 small,
 Inflate themselves with some insane
 delight,
 And judge all nature from her feet of
 clay,
 Without the will to lift their eyes, and
 see
 Her godlike head crown'd with spiritual
 fire,
 And touching other worlds. I am
 weary of her.'

He spoke in words part heard, in
 whispers part,
 Half-suffocated in the hoary fell
 And many-winter'd fleece of throat
 and chin.
 But Vivien, gathering somewhat of
 his mood, 840
 And hearing 'harlot' mutter'd twice
 or thrice,
 Leapt from her session on his lap, and
 stood
 Stiff as a viper frozen; loathsome
 sight,
 How from the rosy lips of life and
 love
 Flash'd the bare-grinning skeleton of
 death!
 White was her cheek; sharp breaths
 of anger puff'd
 Her fairy nostril out; her hand half-
 clench'd
 Went faltering sideways downward
 to her belt,
 And feeling. Had she found a dag-
 ger there—
 For in a wink the false love turns to
 hate— 850
 She would have stabb'd him; but she
 found it not.
 His eye was calm, and suddenly she
 took
 To bitter weeping like a beaten child,
 A long, long weeping, not consolable.
 Then her false voice made way, broken
 with sobs:

'O crueller than was ever told in tale
 Or sung in song! O vainly lavish'd
 love!

O cruel, there was nothing wild or
 strange,
 Or seeming shameful—for what shame
 in love,
 So love be true, and not as yours is?
 —nothing 860
 Poor Vivien had not done to win his
 trust
 Who call'd her what he call'd her—
 all her crime,
 All—all—the wish to prove him
 wholly hers.'

She mused a little, and then clapt
 her hands
 Together with a wailing shriek, and
 said:
 'Stabb'd through the heart's affections
 to the heart!
 Seethed like the kid in its own mo-
 ther's milk!
 Kill'd with a word worse than a life
 of blows!
 I thought that he was gentle, being
 great;
 O God, that I had loved a smaller man!
 I should have found in him a greater
 heart. 871
 O, I, that flattering my true passion,
 saw
 The knights, the court, the King,
 dark in your light,
 Who loved to make men darker than
 they are,
 Because of that high pleasure which
 I had
 To seat you sole upon my pedestal
 Of worship—I am answer'd, and
 henceforth
 The course of life that seem'd so flow-
 ery to me
 With you for guide and master, only
 you,
 Becomes the sea-cliff pathway broken
 short, 880
 And ending in a ruin—nothing left
 But into some low cave to crawl, and
 there,
 If the wolf spare me, weep my life
 away,
 Kill'd with inutterable unkindliness.'

She paused, she turn'd away, she
 hung her head,
 The snake of gold slid from her hair,
 the braid

Slipt and uncoil'd itself, she wept
 afresh,
 And the dark wood grew darker to-
 ward the storm
 In silence, while his anger slowly died
 Within him, till he let his wisdom go
 For ease of heart, and half believed
 her true; 891
 Call'd her to shelter in the hollow oak,
 'Come from the storm,' and having
 no reply,
 Gazed at the heaving shoulder and
 the face
 Hand-hidden, as for utmost grief or
 shame;
 Then thrice essay'd, by tenderest-
 touching terms,
 To sleek her ruffled peace of mind, in
 vain.
 At last she let herself be conquer'd by
 him,
 And as the cageling newly flown re-
 turns,
 The seeming-injured simple-hearted
 thing 900
 Came to her old perch back, and set-
 tled there.
 There while she sat, half-falling from
 his knees,
 Half-nestled at his heart, and since he
 saw
 The slow tear creep from her closed
 eyelid yet,
 About her, more in kindness than in
 love,
 The gentle wizard cast a shielding arm.
 But she dislink'd herself at once and
 rose,
 Her arms upon her breast across, and
 stood,
 A virtuous gentlewoman deeply
 wrong'd,
 Upright and flush'd before him; then
 she said: 910
 'There must be now no passages of
 love
 Betwixt us twain henceforward ever-
 more;
 Since, if I be what I am grossly call'd,
 What should be granted which your
 own gross heart
 Would reckon worth the taking? I
 will go.
 In truth, but one thing now—better
 have died

Thrice than have ask'd it once—could
 make me stay—
 That proof of trust—so often ask'd
 in vain!
 How justly, after that vile term of
 yours,
 I find with grief! I might believe
 you then, 920
 Who knows? once more. Lo! what
 was once to me
 Mere matter of the fancy, now hath
 grown
 The vast necessity of heart and life.
 Farewell; think gently of me, for I
 fear
 My fate or folly, passing gayer youth
 For one so old, must be to love thee
 still.
 But ere I leave thee let me swear once
 more
 That if I schemed against thy peace
 in this,
 May yon just heaven, that darkens
 o'er me, send
 One flash that, missing all things else,
 may make 930
 My scheming brain a cinder, if I lie.'

Scarce had she ceased, when out of
 heaven a bolt—
 For now the storm was close above
 them—struck,
 Furrowing a giant oak, and javelin-
 ing
 With darted spikes and splinters of
 the wood
 The dark earth round. He raised his
 eyes and saw
 The tree that shone white-listed thro'
 the gloom.
 But Vivien, fearing heaven had heard
 her oath,
 And dazzled by the livid-flickering
 fork,
 And deafen'd with the stammering
 cracks and claps 940
 That follow'd, flying back and crying
 out,
 'O Merlin, tho' you do not love me,
 save,
 Yet save me!' clung to him and
 hugg'd him close;
 And call'd him dear protector in her
 fright,
 Nor yet forgot her practice in her
 fright,

But wrought upon his mood and
hugg'd him close.

The pale blood of the wizard at her
touch

Took gayer colors, like an opal warm'd.

She blamed herself for telling hearsay
tales;

She shook from fear, and for her fault
she wept

Of petulancy; she call'd him lord and
liege,

Her seer, her bard, her silver star of eve,

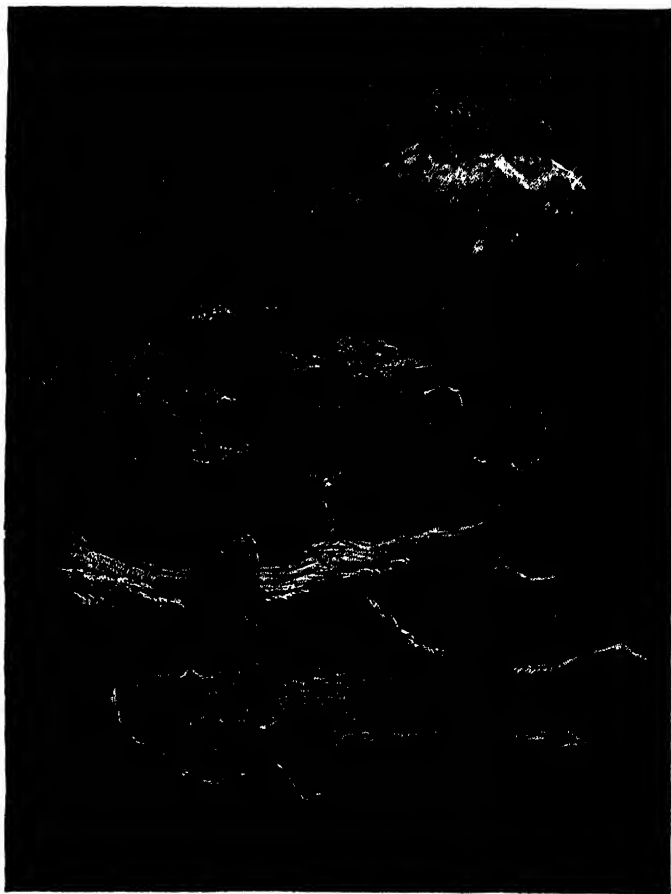
Her God, her Merlin, the one passion-
ate love

Of her whole life; and ever overhead
Bellow'd the tempest, and the rotten
branch

Snapt in the rushing of the river-rain
Above them; and in change of glare
and gloom

Her eyes and neck glittering went
and came;

Till now the storm, its burst of pas-
sion spent,



"I have made his glory mine"

Moaning and calling out of other
lands, ⁹⁶⁰
Had left the ravaged woodland yet
once more
To peace; and what should not have
been had been,
For Merlin, overtalk'd and overworn,
Had yielded, told her all the charm,
and slept.

Then, in one moment, she put forth
the charm
Of woven paces and of waving hands,
And in the hollow oak he lay as
dead,
And lost to life and use and name and
fame.

Then crying, 'I have made his
glory mine,'
And shrieking out, 'O fool!' the har-
lot leapt ⁹⁷⁰
Adown the forest, and the thicket
closed
Behind her, and the forest echo'd
'fool.'

LANCELOT AND ELAINE

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the lovable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to
the east
Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;
Which first she placed where morn-
ing's earliest ray
Might strike it, and awake her with
the gleam;
Then fearing rust or soilure fashion'd
for it
A case of silk, and braided thereupon
All the devices blazon'd on the shield
In their own tinct, and added, of her
wit, ¹⁰
A border fantasy of branch and flower,
And yellow-throated nestling in the
nest.
Nor rested thus content, but day by
day,
Leaving her household and good fa-
ther, climb'd
That eastern tower, and entering
barr'd her door,
Strip'd off the case, and read the naked
shield,

Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his
arms,
Now made a pretty history to herself
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,
And every scratch a lance had made
upon it, ²⁰
Conjecturing when and where: this
cut is fresh,
That ten years back; this dealt him
at Caerlyle,
That at Caerleon — this at Camelot —
And ah, God's mercy, what a stroke
was there!
And here a thrust that might have
kill'd, but God
Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his
enemy down,
And saved him: so she lived in fan-
tasy.

How came the lily maid by that
good shield
Of Lancelot, she that knew not even
his name?
He left it with her, when he rode to
tilt ³⁰
For the great diamond in the diamond
jousts,
Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by
that name
Had named them, since a diamond
was the prize.

For Arthur, long before they
crown'd him king,
Roving the trackless realms of Lyon-
nesse,
Had found a glen, gray boulder and
black tarn.
A horror lived about the tarn, and
clave
Like its own mists to all the mountain
side;
For here two brothers, one a king,
had met
And fought together, but their names
were lost; ⁴⁰
And each had slain his brother at a
blow;
And down they fell and made the
glen abhor'd.
And there they lay till all their bones
were bleach'd,
And lichen'd into color with the crags.
And he that once was king had on a
crown

Of diamonds, one in front and four
aside.

And Arthur came, and laboring up
the pass,

All in a misty moonshine, unawares
Had trodden that crown'd skeleton,
and the skull

Brake from the nape, and from the
skull the crown ⁵⁰

Roll'd into light, and turning on its
rims

Fled like a glittering rivulet to the
tarn.

And down the shingly scaur he
plunged, and caught,

And set it on his head, and in his heart
Heard murmurs, 'Lo, thou likewise
shalt be king.'

Thereafter, when a king, he had
the gems

Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd
them to his knights

Saying: 'These jewels, whereupon I
chanced

Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the
King's—

For public use. Henceforward let
there be, ⁶⁰

Once every year, a joust for one of
these;

For so by nine years' proof we needs
must learn

Which is our mightiest, and ourselves
shall grow

In use of arms and manhood, till we
drive

The heathen, who, some say, shall
rule the land

Hereafter, which God hinder!' Thus
he spoke.

And eight years past, eight jousts
had been, and still

Had Lancelot won the diamond of the
year,

With purpose to present them to the
Queen

When all were won; but, meaning all
at once ⁷⁰

To snare her royal fancy with a boon
Worth half her realm, had never
spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and
the last

And largest, Arthur, holding then his
court

Hard on the river nigh the place
which now

Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a
joust

At Camelot, and when the time drew
nigh

Spake—for she had been sick—to
Guinevere:

'Are you so sick, my Queen, you can-
not move

To these fair jousts?' 'Yea, lord,'
she said, 'ye know it.' ⁸⁰

'Then will ye miss,' he answer'd,
'the great deeds

Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the
lists,

A sight ye love to look on.' And the
Queen

Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt lan-
guidly

On Lancelot, where he stood beside
the King.

He, thinking that he read her mean-
ing there,

'Stay with me, I am sick; my love
is more

Than many diamonds,' yielded; and
a heart

Love-loyal to the least wish of the
Queen—

However much he yearn'd to make
complete ⁹⁰

The tale of diamonds for his destined
boon—

Urged him to speak against the truth,
and say,

'Sir King, mine ancient wound is
hardly whole,

And lets me from the saddle;' and
the King

Glanced first at him, then her, and
went his way.

No sooner gone than suddenly she
be gan:

'To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot,
much to blame!

Why go ye not to these fair jousts?
the knights

Are half of them our enemies, and the
crowd

Will murmur, "Lo the shameless
ones, who take ¹⁰⁰

Their pastime now the trustful King
is gone ! ” ”

Then Lancelot, vexed at having lied in
vain :

‘ Are ye so wise ? ye were not once so
wise,

My Queen, that summer when ye
loved me first.

Then of the crowd ye took no more
account

Than of the myriad cricket of the
mead,

When its own voice clings to each
blade of grass,

And every voice is nothing. As to
knights,

Them surely can I silence with all
ease.

But now my loyal worship is allow’d
Of all men ; many a bard, without
offence,

Has link’d our names together in his
lay,

Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guine-
vere,

The pearl of beauty ; and our knights
at feast

Have pledged us in this union, while
the King

Would listen smiling. How then ? is
there more ?

Has Arthur spoken aught ? or would
yourself,

Now weary of my service and devoir,
Henceforth be truer to your faultless
lord ? ’

She broke into a little scornful
laugh :

‘ Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the fault-
less King,

That passionate perfection, my good
lord —

But who can gaze upon the sun in
heaven ?

He never spake word of reproach to
me,

He never had a glimpse of mine un-
truth,

He cares not for me. Only here to-
day

There gleamed a vague suspicion in
his eyes ;

Some meddling rogue has tamper’d
with him — else

Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,

And swearing men to vows impossi-
ble,

To make them like himself ; but,
friend, to me

He is all fault who hath no fault at
all.

For who loves me must have a touch
of earth ;

The low sun makes the color. I am
yours,

Not Arthur’s, as ye know, save by the
bond.

And therefore hear my words : go to
the jousts :

The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break
our dream

When sweetest ; and the vermin
voices here

May buzz so loud — we scorn them,
but they sting.’

Then answer’d Lancelot, the chief
of knights :

‘ And with what face, after my pre-
text made,

Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I
Before a king who honors his own
word

As if it were his God’s ? ’

‘ Yea,’ said the Queen,

‘ A moral child without the craft to
rule,

Else had he not lost me ; but listen to
me,

If I must find you wit. We hear it
said

That men go down before your spear
at a touch,

But knowing you are Lancelot ; your
great name,

This conquers. Hide it therefore ;
go unknown.

Win ! by this kiss you will ; and our
true King

Will then allow your pretext, O my
knight,

As all for glory ; for to speak him
true,

Ye know right well, how meek soe’er
he seem,

No keener hunter after glory breathes.
He loves it in his knights more than

himself ;

They prove to him his work. Win
and return.’

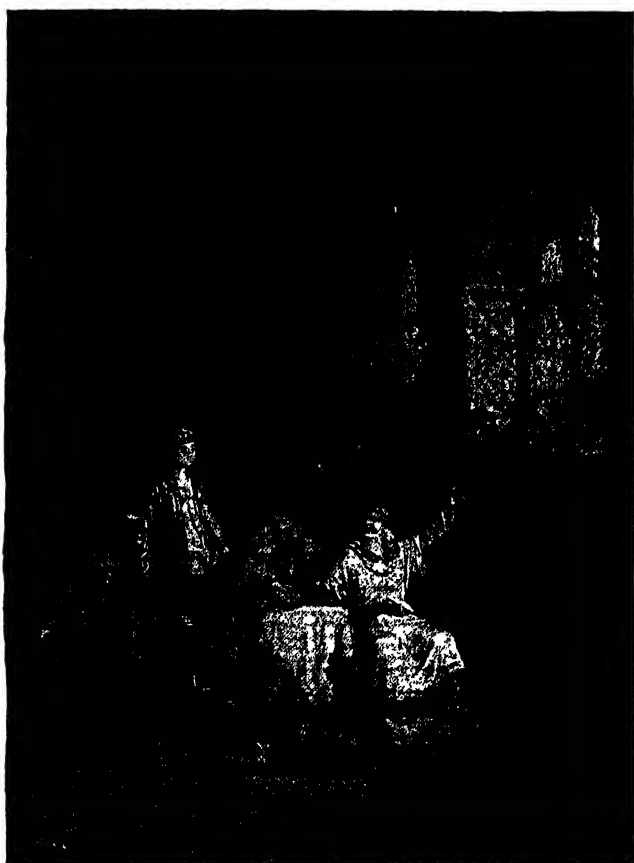
Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,
 Wroth at himself. Not willing to be known,
 He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,¹⁶⁰
 Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,
 And there among the solitary downs,
 Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;
 Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,
 That all in loops and links among the dales
 Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
 Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.
 Thither he made, and blew the gate-way horn.
 Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,
 Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.
 And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless man;¹⁷¹
 And issuing found the Lord of Astolat
 With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,
 Moving to meet him in the castle court;
 And close behind them stept the lily-maid
 Elaine, his daughter; mother of the house
 There was not. Some light jest among them rose
 With laughter dying down as the great knight
 Approach'd them; then the Lord of Astolat:
 'Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name'¹⁸⁰
 Livest between the lips? for by thy state
 And presence I might guess thee chief of those,
 After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.
 Him have I seen; the rest, his Table Round,
 Known as they are, to me they are unknown.'

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights:
 'Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,

What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.
 But since I go to joust as one unknown
 At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not;¹⁹⁰
 Hereafter ye shall know me — and the shield —
 I pray you lend me one, if such you have,
 Blank, or at least with some device not mine.'

Then said the Lord of Astolat:
 'Here is Torre's:
 Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre,
 And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.
 His ye can have.' Then added plain Sir Torre,
 'Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have it.'
 Here laugh'd the father saying: 'Fie, Sir Churl,
 Is that an answer for a noble knight? Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger here,²⁰¹
 He is so full of lustihood, he will ride, Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour,
 And set it in this damsel's golden hair,
 To make her thrice as wilful as before.'

'Nay, father, nay, good father, shame me not
 Before this noble knight,' said young Lavaine,
 'For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre,
 He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go;
 A jest, no more! for, knight, the maiden dreamt'²¹⁰
 That some one put this diamond in her hand,
 And that it was too slippery to be held,
 And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,
 The castle-well, belike; and then I said
 That if I went and if I fought and won it —
 But all was jest and joke among ourselves —
 Then must she keep it safer. All was jest.



'The lily maid Elaine . . .
Lifted her eyes and read his lineaments'

But, father, give me leave, an if he
will,
To ride to Camelot with this noble
knight.
Win shall I not, but do my best to
win;
Young as I am, yet would I do my
best.' 221

'So ye will grace me,' answer'd
Lancelot.

Smiling a moment, 'with your fel-
lowship
O'er these waste downs whereon I lost
myself,
Then were I glad of you as guide and
friend:
And you shall win this diamond, — as
I hear,
It is a fair large diamond, — if ye
may.
And yield it to this maiden, if ye will'

'A fair large diamond,' added plain
Sir Torre,
'Such be for queens, and not for simple maids.'²³⁰
Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,
Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,
Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement
Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd:
'If what is fair be but for what is fair,
And only queens are to be counted so,
Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid
Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,
Not violating the bond of like to like.'

He spoke and ceased; the lily maid Elaine,²⁴¹
Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,
Lifted her eyes and read his lineaments.
The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,
In battle with the love he bare his lord,
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.
Another sinning on such heights with one,
The flower of all the west and all the world,
Had been the sleeker for it; but in him
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose²⁵⁰
And drove him into wastes and solitudes
For agony, who was yet a living soul.
Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man
That ever among ladies ate in hall,
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.
However marr'd, or more than twice her years,
Seam'd with an ancient sword-cut on the cheek,
And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes
And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,²⁶⁰
Loyed of the loveliest, into that rude hall
Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain
Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
But kindly man moving among his kind;
Whom they with meats and vintage of their best
And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.
And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,
And ever well and readily answer'd he;
But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,
Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,²⁷⁰
Heard from the baron that, ten years before,
The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.
'He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design
Against my house, and him they caught and maim'd;
But I, my sons, and little daughter fled
From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods
By the great river in a boatman's hut.
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke
The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill.'

'O, there, great lord, doubtless,' Lavaine said, rapt²⁸⁰
By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth
Toward greatness in its elder, 'you have fought.
O, tell us—for we live apart—you know
Of Arthur's glorious wars.' And Lancelot spoke
And answer'd him at full, as having been
With Arthur in the fight which all day long
Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem;
And in the four loud battles by the shore

Of Douglas; that on Bassa; then the
war
That thunder'd in and out the gloomy
skirts 290
Of Celidon the forest; and again
By Castle Gurnion, where the glori-
ous King
Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's
Head,
Carved of one emerald centred in a sun
Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he
breathed;
And at Caerleon had he help'd his
lord,
When the strong neighings of the wild
White Horse
Set every gilded parapet shuddering;
And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,
And down the waste sand-shores of
Trath Treroit, 300
Where many a heathen fell, 'and on
the mount
Of Badon I myself beheld the King
Charge at the head of all his Table
Round,
And all his legions crying Christ and
him,
And break them; and I saw him,
after, stand
High on a heap of slain, from spur to
plume
Red as the rising sun with heathen
blood,
And seeing me, with a great voice he
cried,
'They are broken, they are broken!'
for the King,
However mild he seems at home, nor
cares 310
For triumph in our mimic wars, the
jousts—
For if his own knight casts him down,
he laughs,
Saying his knights are better men than
he—
Yet in this heathen war the fire of
God
Fills him. I never saw his like; there
lives
No greater leader.'

While he utter'd this,
Low to her own heart said the lily
maid,
'Save your great self, fair lord;' and
when he fell

From talk of war to traits of plesan-
try—
Being mirthful he, but in a stately
kind— 320
She still took note that when the liv-
ing smile
Died from his lips, across him came a
cloud
Of melancholy severe, from which
again,
Whenever in her hovering to and
fro
The lily maid had striven to make him
cheer,
There brake a sudden-beaming tender-
ness
Of manners and of nature; and she
thought
That all was nature, all, perchance,
for her.
And all night long his face before her
lived,
As when a painter, poring on a face, 330
Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the
man
Behind it, and so paints him that his
face,
The shape and color of a mind and life,
Lives for his children, ever at its best
And fullest; so the face before her
lived,
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence,
full
Of noble things, and held her from
her sleep,
Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the
thought
She needs must bid farewell to sweet
Lavaine.
First as in fear, step after step, she
stole 340
Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating.
Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in
the court,
'This shield, my friend, where is it?'
and Lavaine
Past inward, as she came from out the
tower.
There to his proud horse Lancelot
turn'd, and smooth'd
The glossy shoulder, humming to
himself.
Half-envious of the flattering hand,
she drew
Nearer and stood. He look'd, and,
more amazed

Than if seven men had set upon him,
 saw
 The maiden standing in the dewy
 light. ³⁵⁰
 He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.
 Then came on him a sort of sacred
 fear,
 For silent, tho' he greeted her, she
 stood
 Rapt on his face as if it were a
 god's.
 Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire
 That he should wear her favor at the
 tilt.
 She braved a riotous heart in asking
 for it.
 'Fair lord, whose name I know not—
 noble it is,
 I well believe, the noblest—will you
 wear
 My favor at this tourney?' 'Nay,'
 said he, ³⁶⁰
 'Fair lady, since I never yet have worn
 Favor of any lady in the lists.
 Such is my wont, as those who know
 me know.'
 'Yea, so,' she answer'd; 'then in
 wearing mine
 Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble
 lord,
 That those who know should know
 you.' And he turn'd
 Her counsel up and down within his
 mind,
 And found it true, and answer'd:
 'True, my child.
 Well, I will wear it; fetch it out to
 me.
 What is it?' and she told him, 'A red
 sleeve ³⁷⁰
 Broider'd with pearls,' and brought it.
 Then he bound
 Her token on his helmet, with a smile
 Saying, 'I never yet have done so
 much
 For any maiden living,' and the blood
 Sprang to her face and fill'd her with
 delight;
 But left her all the paler when Lavaine
 Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd
 shield,
 His brother's, which he gave to Lance
 lot,
 Who parted with his own to fair
 Elaine:

'Do me this grace, my child, to have
 my shield ³⁸⁰
 In keeping till I come.' 'A grace to
 me,'
 She answer'd, 'twice to-day. I am
 your squire!'
 Whereat Lavaine said laughing: 'Lily
 maid,
 For fear our people call you lily maid
 In earnest, let me bring your color
 back;
 Once, twice, and thrice. Now get
 you hence to bed;' ³⁹⁰
 So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his
 own hand,
 And thus they moved away. She
 staid a minute,
 Then made a sudden step to the gate,
 and there—
 Her bright hair blown about the
 serious face
 Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's
 kiss—
 Paused by the gateway, standing near
 the shield
 In silence, while she watch'd their
 arms far-off
 Sparkle, until they dipt below the
 downs.
 Then to her tower she climb'd, and
 took the shield,
 There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions
 past away
 Far o'er the long backs of the bushless
 downs,
 To where Sir Lancelot knew there
 lived a knight
 Not far from Camelot, now for forty
 years ⁴⁰⁰
 A hermit, who had pray'd, labor'd and
 pray'd,
 And ever laboring had scoop'd himself
 In the white rock a chapel and a
 hall
 On massive columns, like a shore-cliff
 cave,
 And cells and chambers. All were
 fair and dry;
 The green light from the meadows
 underneath
 Struck up and lived along the milky
 roofs;
 And in the meadows tremulous aspen-
 trees

And poplars made a noise of falling
showers.
And thither wending there that night
they bode. ⁴¹⁰

But when the next day broke from
underground,
And shot red fire and shadows thro'
the cave,
They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and
rode away.
Then Lancelot saying, 'Hear, but
hold my name
Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the
Lake,'
Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant rever-
ence,
Dearer to true young hearts than their
own praise,
But left him leave to stammer, 'Is it
indeed ?'
And after muttering, 'The great
Lancelot,'
At last he got his breath and answer'd :
'One, ⁴²⁰
One have I seen — that other, our liege
lord,
The dread Pendragon, Britain's King
of kings,
Of whom the people talk mysteri-
ously,
He will be there — then were I stricken
blind
That minute, I might say that I had
seen.'

So spake Lavaine, and when they
reach'd the lists
By Camelot in the meadow, let his
eyes
Run thro' the peopled gallery which
half round
Lay like a rainbow fallen upon the
grass,
Until they found the clear-faced King,
who sat ⁴³⁰
Robed in red samite, easily to be
known,
Since to his crown the golden dragon
clung,
And down his robe the dragon writhed
in gold,
And from the carven-work behind him
crept
Two dragons gilded, sloping down to
make

Arms for his chair, while all the rest
of them
Thro' knots and loops and folds in-
numerable
Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they
found
The new design wherein they lost
themselves,
Yet with all ease, so tender was the
work ; ⁴⁴⁰
And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,
Blazed the last diamond of the name-
less king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young La
vaine and said :
'Me you call great ; mine is the firmer
seat,
The truer lance ; but there is many a
youth
Now crescent, who will come to all I
am
And overcome it ; and in me there
dwells
No greatness, save it be some far-off
touch
Of greatness to know well I am not
great.
There is the man.' And Lavaine
gaped upon him ⁴⁵⁰
As on a thing miraculous, and anon
The trumpets blew ; and then did
either side,
They that assail'd, and they that held
the lists,
Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly
move,
Meet in the midst, and there so fu-
riously
Shock that a man far-off might well
perceive,
If any man that day were left afield,
The hard earth shake, and a low
thunder of arms.
And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw
Which were the weaker ; then he
hurl'd into it ⁴⁶⁰
Against the stronger. Little need to
speak
Of Lancelot in his glory ! King, duke,
earl,
Count, baron — whom he smote, he
overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's
kith and kin,

Ranged with the Table Round that
held the lists,
Strong men, and wrathful that a
stranger knight
Should do and almost overdo the deeds
Of Lancelot; and one said to the other,
'Lo!

What is he? I do not mean the force
alone—

The grace and versatility of the man!
Is it not Lancelot?' 'When has Lan-
celot worn 471

Favor of any lady in the lists?
Not such his wont, as we that know
him know.'

'How then? who then?' a fury seized
them all,

A fiery family passion for the name
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with
theirs.

They couch'd their spears and prick'd
their steeds, and thus,

Their plumes driven backward by the
wind they made

In moving, all together down upon
him

Bare, as a wild wave in the wide
North Sea, 480

Green-glimmering toward the summit,
bears, with all

Its stormy crests that smoke against
the skies,

Down on a bark, and overbears the
bark

And him that helms it; so they over-
bore

Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a
spear

Down-glancing lamed the charger,
and a spear

Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and
the head

Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt
and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and wor-
shipfully.

He bore a knight of old repute to the
earth, 490

And brought his horse to Lancelot
where he lay.

He up the side, sweating with agony,
got,

But thought to do while he might yet
endure,

And being lustily holpen by the rest,

His party, — tho' it seem'd half-miracle
To those he fought with, — drave his
kith and kin,

And all the Table Round that held
the lists,

Back to the barrier; then the trumpets
blew

Proclaiming his the prize who wore
the sleeve

Of scarlet and the pearls; and all the
knights,

His party, cried, 'Advance and take
thy prize 500

The diamond;' but he answer'd:
'Diamond me

No diamonds! for God's love, a little
air!

Prize me no prizes, for my prize is
death!

Hence will I, and I charge you, fol-
low me not.'

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly
from the field

With young Lavaine into the poplar
grove.

There from his charger down he slid,
and sat,

Gasping to Sir Lavaine, 'Draw the
lance-head.'

'Ah, my sweet lord Sir Lancelot,'
said Lavaine, 510

'I dread me, if I draw it, you will die.'
But he, 'I die already with it; draw —

Draw,' — and Lavaine drew, and Sir
Lancelot gave

A marvellous great shriek and ghastly
groan,

And half his blood burst forth, and
down he sank

For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd
away.

Then came the hermit out and bare
him in,

There stanch'd his wound; and there,
in daily doubt

Whether to live or die, for many a
week

Hid from the wild world's rumor by
the grove 520

Of poplars with their noise of falling
showers,

And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled
the lists,

His party, knights of utmost North
and West,
Lords of waste marshes, kings of de-
solate isles,
Came round their great Pendragon,
saying to him,
'Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we
won the day,
Hath gone sore wounded, and hath
left his prize
Untaken, crying that his prize is
death.
'Heaven hinder,' said the King, 'that
such an one, ⁵³⁰
So great a knight as we have seen to-
day —
He seem'd to me another Lancelot —
Yea, twenty times I thought him
Lancelot —
He must not pass uncared for. Where-
fore rise,
O Gawain, and ride forth and find the
knight.
Wounded and wearied, needs must he
be near.
I charge you that you get at once to
horse.
And, knights and kings, there breathes
not one of you
Will deem this prize of ours is rashly
given;
His prowess was too wondrous. We
will do him ⁵⁴⁰
No customary honor; since the knight
Came not to us, of us to claim the
prize,
Ourselves will send it after. Rise and
take
This diamond, and deliver it, and re-
turn,
And bring us where he is, and how
he fares,
And cease not from your quest until
ye find'

So saying, from the carven flower
above,
To which it made a restless heart, he
took
And gave the diamond. Then from
where he sat
At Arthur's right, with smiling face
arose, ⁵⁵⁰
With smiling face and frowning heart,
a prince

In the mid might and flourish of his
May,
Gawain, surnamed the Courteous, fair
and strong,
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and
Geraint,
And Gareth, a good knight, but there-
withal
Sir Modred's brother, and the child of
Lot,
Nor often loyal to his word, and
now
Wroth that the King's command to
sally forth
In quest of whom he knew not, made
him leave
The banquet and concourse of knights
and kings. ⁵⁶⁰

So all in wrath he got to horse and
went;
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in
mood,
Past, thinking, 'Is it Lancelot who
hath come
Despite the wound he spake of, all
for gain
Of glory, and hath added wound to
wound,
And ridden away to die?' So fear'd
the King,
And, after two days' tarriance there,
return'd.
Then when he saw the Queen, em-
bracing ask'd,
'Love, are you yet so sick?' 'Nay,
lord,' she said.
'And where is Lancelot?' Then the
Queen amazed, ⁵⁷⁰
'Was he not with you? won he not
your prize?'
'Nay, but one like him.' 'Why, that
like was he.'
And when the King demanded how
she knew,
Said: 'Lord, no sooner had ye parted
from us
Than Lancelot told me of a common
talk
That men went down before his spear
at a touch,
But knowing he was Lancelot; his
great name
Conquer'd; and therefore would he
hide his name

From all men, even the King, and to
 this end
 Had made the pretext of a hindering
 wound,⁵⁸⁰
 That he might joust unknown of all,
 and learn
 If his old prowess were in aught de-
 cay'd;
 And added, "Our true Arthur, when
 he learns,
 Will well allow my pretext, as for
 gain
 Of purer glory."

Then replied the King:
 'Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it
 been,
 In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
 To have trusted me as he hath trusted
 thee.
 Surely his King and most familiar
 friend
 Might well have kept his secret.
 True, indeed,⁵⁹⁰
 Albeit I know my knights fantasti-
 cal,
 So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
 Must needs have moved my laughter;
 now remains
 But little cause for laughter. His own
 kin —
 Ill news, my Queen, for all who love
 him, this! —
 His kith and kin, not knowing, set
 upon him;
 So that he went sore wounded from
 the field.
 Yet good news too; for goodly hopes
 are mine
 That Lancelot is no more a lonely
 heart.
 He wore, against his wont, upon his
 helm⁶⁰⁰
 A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with
 great pearls,
 Some gentle maiden's gift.'

'Yea, lord,' she said,
 'Thy hopes are mine,' and saying
 that, she choked,
 And sharply turn'd about to hide her
 face,
 Past to her chamber, and there flung
 herself
 Down on the great King's couch, and
 writhed upon it,

And clench'd her fingers till they bit
 the palm,
 And shriek'd out 'Traitor!' to the
 unhearing wall,
 Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose
 again,
 And moved about her palace, proud
 and pale.⁶¹⁰

Gawain the while thro' all the region
 round
 Rode with his diamond, wearied of the
 quest,
 Touch'd at all points except the pop-
 lar grove,
 And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat;
 Whom glittering in enamell'd arms
 the maid
 Glanced at, and cried, 'What news
 from Camelot, lord?
 What of the knight with the red
 sleeve?' 'He won,'
 'I knew it,' she said. 'But parted
 from the jousts
 Hurt in the side;' whereat she caught
 her breath.
 Thro' her own side she felt the sharp
 lance go.⁶²⁰
 Thereon she smote her hand; well-
 nigh she swoon'd.
 And, while he gazed wonderingly at
 her, came
 The Lord of Astolat out, to whom the
 prince
 Reported who he was, and on what
 quest
 Sent, that he bore the prize and could
 not find
 The victor, but had ridden a random
 round
 To seek him, and had wearied of the
 search.
 To whom the Lord of Astolat: 'Bide
 with us,
 And ride no more at random, noble
 prince!
 Here was the knight, and here he left
 a shield;⁶³⁰
 This will he send or come for. Fur-
 thermore
 Our son is with him; we shall hear
 anon,
 Needs must we hear.' To this the
 courteous prince
 Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
 Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,

And staid; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine;
 Where could be found face daintier? then her shape
 From forehead down to foot, perfect — again
 From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd:
 'Well — if I bide, lo! this wild flower for me!' 640
 And oft they met among the garden yews,
 And there he set himself to play upon her
 With sallying wit, free flashes from a height
 Above her, graces of the court, and songs,
 Sighs, and low smiles, and golden eloquence
 And amorous adulation, till the maid
 Rebell'd against it, saying to him:
 'Prince,
 O loyal nephew of our noble King,
 Why ask you not to see the shield he left,
 Whence you might learn his name?
 Why slight your King, 650
 And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove
 No surer than our falcon yesterday,
 Who lost the hern we slipt her at, and went
 To all the winds?' 'Nay, by mine head,' said he,
 'I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,
 O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes;
 But an ye will it let me see the shield.'
 And when the shield was brought, and Gawain saw
 Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with gold,
 Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and mock'd: 660
 'Right was the King! our Lancelot! that true man!'
 'And right was I,' she answer'd merrily, 'I,
 Who dream'd my knight the greatest knight of all.'
 'And if I dream'd,' said Gawain, 'that you love
 This greatest knight, your pardon! lo, ye know it!

Speak therefore; shall I waste myself in vain?'
 Full simple was her answer: 'What know I?
 My brethren have been all my fellow-ship;
 And I, when often they have talk'd of love,
 Wish'd it had been my mother, for they talk'd, 670
 Mescem'd, of what they knew not; so myself —
 I know not if I know what true love is,
 But if I know, then, if I love not him,
 I know there is none other I can love.'
 'Yea, by God's death,' said he, 'ye love him well,
 But would not, knew ye what all others know,
 And whom he loves.' 'So be it,' cried Elaine,
 And lifted her fair face and moved away;
 But he pursued her, calling, 'Stay a little!
 One golden minute's grace! he wore your sleeve. 680
 Would he break faith with one I may not name?
 Must our true man change like a leaf at last?
 Nay — like enow. Why then, far be it from me
 To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves!
 And, damsel, for I deem you know full well
 Where your great knight is hidden, let me leave
 My quest with you; the diamond also — here!
 For if you love, it will be sweet to give it;
 And if he love, it will be sweet to have it
 From your own hand; and whether he love or not, 690
 A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well
 A thousand times! — a thousand times farewell!
 Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two

May meet at court hereafter ! there, I
think,
So ye will learn the courtesies of the
court,
We two shall know each other.'

Then he gave,
And slightly kiss'd the hand to which
he gave,
The diamond, and all wearied of the
quest
Leapt on his horse, and carolling as
he went
A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past ; there
told the King
What the King knew, ' Sir Lancelot
is the knight.'
And added, ' Sire, my liege, so much
I learnt,
But fail'd to find him, tho' I rode all
round
The region ; but I lighted on the maid
Whose sleeve he wore. She loves
him ; and to her,
Deeming our courtesy is the truest
law,
I gave the diamond. She will render
it ;
For by mine head she knows his hid-
ing-place.'

The seldom-frowning King frown'd,
and replied,
Too courteous truly ! ye shall go no
more
On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings.'

He spake and parted. Wroth, but
all in awe,
For twenty strokes of the blood, with-
out a word,
Linger'd that other, staring after him ;
Then shook his hair, strode off, and
buzz'd abroad
About the maid of Astolat, and her
love.
All ears were prick'd at once, all
tongues were loosed :
'The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lance-
lot,
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat.'
Some read the King's face, some the
Queen's, and all

Had marvel what the maid might be,
but most
Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old
dame
Came suddenly on the Queen with the
sharp news.
She, that had heard the noise of it
before,
But sorrowing Lancelot should have
stoop'd so low,
Marr'd her friend's aim with pale tran-
quillity.
So ran the tale like fire about the court,
Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' won-
der flared ;
Till even the knights at banquet twice
or thrice
Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the
Queen,
And pledging Lancelot and the lily
maid
Smiled at each other, while the Queen,
who sat
With lips severely placid, felt the knot
Climb in her throat, and with her feet
unseen
Crush'd the wild passion out against
the floor
Beneath the banquet, where the meats
became
As wormwood and she hated all who
pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,
Her guiltless rival, she that ever
kept
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her
heart,
Crept to her father, while he mused
alone,
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face
and said :
'Father, you call me wilful, and the
fault
Is yours who let me have my will, and
now,
Sweet father, will you let me lose my
wits ?'
'Nay,' said he, 'surely.' 'Wherefore,
let me hence,'
She answer'd, 'and find out our dear
Lavaine.'
'Ye will not lose your wits for dear
Lavaine.
Bide,' answer'd he : 'we needs must
hear anon

Of him, and of that other.' 'Ay,' she
said,
'And of that other, for I needs must
hence
And find that other, wheresoe'er he be,
And with mine own hand give his dia-
mond to him,
Lest I be found as faithless in the
quest
As yon proud prince who left the
quest to me.
Sweet father, I behold him in my
dreams
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of him-
self,
Death-pale, for the lack of gentle
maiden's aid. 760
The gentler-born the maiden, the more
bound,
My father, to be sweet and serviceable
To noble knights in sickness, as ye
know,
When these have worn their tokens.
Let me hence,
I pray you.' Then her father nodding
said:
'Ay, ay, the diamond. Wit ye well,
my child,
Right fain were I to learn this knight
were whole,
Being our greatest. Yea, and you
must give it —
And sure I think this fruit is hung too
high
For any mouth to gape for save a
queen's — 770
Nay, I mean nothing; so then, get you
gone,
Being so very wilful you must go.'

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt
away,
And while she made her ready for her
ride
Her father's latest word humm'd in
her ear,
'Being so very wilful you must go,'
And changed itself and echo'd in her
heart,
'Being so very wilful you must die.'
But she was happy enough and shook
it off,
As we shake off the bee that buzzes
at us; 780
And in her heart she answer'd it and
said,

'What matter, so I help him back to
life?'
Then far away with good Sir Torre
for guide
Rode o'er the long backs of the bush-
less downs
To Camelot, and before the city-gates
Came on her brother with a happy face
Making a roan horse caper and curvet
For pleasure all about a field of flow-
ers;
Whom when she saw, 'Lavaine,' she
cried, 'Lavaine,
How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?'
He amazed, 790
'Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir
Lancelot!
How know ye my lord's name is Lan-
celot?'
But when the maid had told him all
her tale,
Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in
his moods
Left them, and under the strange-
statued gate,
Where Arthur's wars were render'd
mystically,
Past up the still rich city to his kin,
His own far blood, which dwelt at
Camelot;
And her, Lavaine across the poplar
grove
Led to the caves. There first she saw
the casque 800
Of Lancelot on the wall; her scarlet
sleeve,
Tho' carved and cut, and half the
pearls away,
Stream'd from it still; and in her
heart she laugh'd,
Because he had not loosed it from his
helm,
But meant once more perchance to
tourney in it.
And when they gain'd the cell wherein
he slept,
His battle-written arms and mighty
hands
Lay naked on the wolf-skin, and a
dream
Of dragging down his enemy made
them move.
Then she that saw him lying unsleek,
unshorn, 810
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of him-
self,

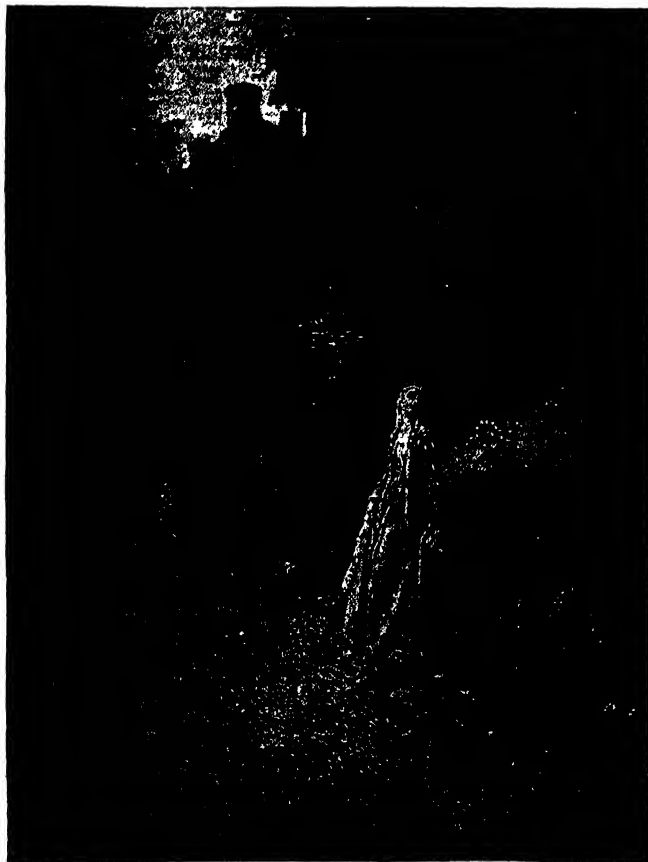
Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.
 The sound not wonted in a place so
 still
 Woke the sick knight, and while he
 roll'd his eyes
 Yet blank from sleep, she started to
 him, saying,
 'Your prize the diamond sent you by
 the King.'
 His eyes glisten'd; she fancied, 'Is it
 for me?'
 And when the maid had told him all
 the tale
 Of king and prince, the diamond sent,
 the quest
 Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she
 knelt 820
 Full lowly by the corners of his bed,
 And laid the diamond in his open hand.
 Her face was near, and as we kiss the
 child
 That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd
 her face.
 At once she slipt like water to the floor.
 'Alas,' he said, 'your ride hath wearied you.
 Rest must you have.' 'No rest for me,'
 she said;
 'Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at
 rest.'
 What might she mean by that? his
 large black eyes,
 Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt
 upon her, 830
 Till all her heart's sad secret blazed
 itself
 In the heart's colors on her simple face;
 And Lancelot look'd and was perplexed in mind,
 And being weak in body said no more,
 But did not love the color; woman's
 love,
 Save one, he not regarded, and so
 turn'd
 Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he
 slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro'
 the fields,
 And past beneath the weirdly-sculptured
 gates
 Far up the dim rich city to her kin;
 There bode the night, but woke with
 dawn, and past 841
 Down thro' the dim rich city to the
 fields,

Thence to the cave. So day by day
 she past
 In either twilight ghost-like to and fro
 Gliding, and every day she tended him,
 And likewise many a night; and Lancelot
 Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little
 hurt
 Whereof he should be quickly whole,
 at times
 Brain-feverous in his heat and agony,
 seem
 Uncourteous, even he. But the meek
 maid 850
 Sweetly forbore him ever, being to
 him
 Meeker than any child to a rough
 nurse,
 Milder than any mother to a sick
 child,
 And never woman yet, since man's
 first fall,
 Did kindlier unto man, but her deep
 love
 Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd in
 all
 The simples and the science of that
 time,
 Told him that her fine care had saved
 his life.
 And the sick man forgot her simple
 blush,
 Would call her friend and sister, 860
 Elaine,
 Would listen for her coming and regret
 Her parting step, and held her tenderly,
 And loved her with all love except
 the love
 Of man and woman when they love
 their best,
 Closest and sweetest, and had died
 the death
 In any knightly fashion for her sake.
 And peradventure had he seen her
 first
 She might have made this and that
 other world
 Another world for the sick man; but
 now
 The shackles of an old love straiten'd
 him, 870
 His honor rooted in dishonor stood,
 And faith unfaithful kept him falsely
 true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-
sickness made
Full many a holy vow and pure re-
solve.
These, as but born of sickness, could
not live ;
For when the blood ran lustier in him
again,
Full often the bright image of one
face,
Making a treacherous quiet in his
heart,
Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.

Then if the maiden, while that ghostly
grace⁸⁸⁰
Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he an-
swer'd not,
Or short and coldly, and she knew
right well
What the rough sickness meant, but
what this meant
She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd
her sight,
And drave her ere her time across the
fields
Far into the rich city, where alone



' Day by day she past
In either twilight ghost-like to and fro '

She murmur'd, 'Vain, in vain! it cannot be.

He will not love me. How then? must I die?' ⁸⁹⁰

Then as a little helpless innocent bird,
That has but one plain passage of few notes,

Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er

For all an April morning, till the ear
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid
Went half the night repeating, 'Must I die?'

And now to right she turn'd, and now to left,

And found no ease in turning or in rest;
And 'Him or death,' she mutter'd,
'death or him,'

Again and like a burthen, 'Him or death.'

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was whole,

To Astolat returning rode the three.

There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self ⁹⁰¹

In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her best,

She came before Sir Lancelot, for she thought,

'If I be loved, these are my festal robes,

If not, the victim's flowers before he fall.'

And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid

That she should ask some goodly gift of him

For her own self or hers: 'and do not shun

To speak the wish most near to your true heart;

Such service have ye done me that I make ⁹¹⁰

My will of yours, and prince and lord am I

In mine own land, and what I will I can.'

Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,

But like a ghost without the power to speak.

And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish,

And bode among them yet a little space

Till he should learn it; and one morn it chanced

He found her in among the garden yews,

And said, 'Delay no longer, speak your wish,

Seeing I go to-day.' Then out she brake: ⁹²⁰

'Going? and we shall never see you more.

And I must die for want of one bold word.'

'Speak; that I live to hear,' he said 'is yours.'

Then suddenly and passionately she spoke:

'I have gone mad. I love you; let me die.'

'Ah, sister,' answer'd Lancelot, 'what is this?'

And innocently extending her white arms,

'Your love,' she said, 'your love — to be your wife.'

And Lancelot answer'd, 'Had I chosen to wed,

I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine; ⁹³⁰

But now there never will be wife of mine.'

'No, no,' she cried, 'I care not to be wife,

But to be with you still, to see your face,

To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world.'

And Lancelot answer'd: 'Nay, the world, the world,

All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart

To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue

To blare its own interpretation — nay,

Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,

And your good father's kindness.'

And she said, ⁹⁴⁰

'Not to be with you, not to see your face —

Alas for me then, my good days are done!'

'Nay, noble maid,' he answer'd, 'ten times nay!

This is not love, but love's first flash in youth

Most common; yea, I know it of
mine own self,
And you yourself will smile at your
own self
Hereafter, when you yield your flower
of life
To one more fitly yours, not thrice
your age.
And then will I, for true you are and
sweet
Beyond mine old belief in woman-
hood, ⁹⁵⁰
More specially should your good
knight be poor,
Endow you with broad land and ter-
ritory
Even to the half my realm beyond the
seas,
So that would make you happy; fur-
thermore,
Even to the death, as tho' ye were my
blood,
In all your quarrels will I be your
knight.
This will I do, dear damsel, for your
sake,
And more than this I cannot.'

While he spoke
She neither blush'd nor shook, but
deathly-pale
Stood grasping what was nearest, then
replied, ⁹⁶⁰
'Of all this will I nothing;' and so fell,
And thus they bore her swooning to
her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those
black walls of yew
Their talk had pierced, her father:
'Ay, a flash,
I fear me, that will strike my blossom
dead.
Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lance-
lot.
I pray you, use some rough discour-
tesy
To blunt or break her passion.'

Lancelot said,
'That were against me; what I can I
will;'
And there that day remain'd, and
toward even ⁹⁷⁰
Sent for his shield. Full meekly rose
the maid,

Stript off the case, and gave the
naked shield;
Then, when she heard his horse upon
the stones,
Unclassing flung the casement back,
and look'd
Down on his helm, from which her
sleeve had gone.
And Lancelot knew the little clinking
sound;
And she by tact of love was well
aware
That Lancelot knew that she was look-
ing at him.
And yet he glanced not up, nor waved
his hand,
Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode
away. ⁹⁸⁰
This was the one discourtesy that he
used.

So in her tower alone the maiden
sat.
His very shield was gone; only the
case,
Her own poor work, her empty labor,
left.
But still she heard him, still his pic-
ture form'd
And grew between her and the pic-
tured wall.
Then came her father, saying in low
tones,
'Have comfort,' whom she greeted
quietly.
Then came her brethren saying,
'Peace to thee,
Sweet sister,' whom she answer'd
with all calm. ⁹⁹⁰
But when they left her to herself
again,
Death, like a friend's voice from a
distant field
Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd;
the owls
Wailing had power upon her, and she
mixt
Her fancies with the sorrow-rifted
glooms
Of evening and the moanings of the
wind.

And in those days she made a little
song,
And call'd her song 'The Song of
Love and Death.'

And sang it; sweetly could she make
and sing.

'Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in
vain;
And sweet is death who puts an end to
pain.
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death
must be.
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

'Sweet love, that seems not made to
fade away;
Sweet death, that seems to make us love-
less clay;
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

'I fain would follow love, if that could
be;
I needs must follow death, who calls for
me;
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die.'

High with the last line scaled her
voice, and this,
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
That shook her tower, the brothers
heard, and thought
With shuddering, 'Hark the Phantom
of the house
That ever shrieks before a death,' and
call'd
The father, and all three in hurry and
fear
Ran to her, and lo! the blood-red light
of dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling, 'Let
me die!'

As when we dwell upon a word we
know,
Repeating, till the word we know so
well
Becomes a wonder, and we know not
why,
So dwelt the father on her face, and
thought,
'Is this Elaine?' till back the maiden
fell,
Then gave a languid hand to each,
and lay,
Speaking a still good-morrow with
her eyes.
At last she said: 'Sweet brothers,
yester-night
I seem'd a curious little maid again,

As happy as when we dwelt among
the woods,

And when ye used to take me with
the flood

Up the great river in the boatman's
boat.

Only ye would not pass beyond the
cape

That has the poplar on it; there ye fixt
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.
And yet I cried because ye would not
pass

Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
Until we found the palace of the King.
And yet ye would not; but this night
I dream'd

That I was all alone upon the flood,
And then I said, "Now shall I have
my will;"

And there I woke, but still the wish
remain'd.

So let me hence that I may pass at last
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,
Until I find the palace of the King.

There will I enter in among them all,
And no man there will dare to mock
at me;

But there the fine Gawain will wonder
at me,

And there the great Sir Lancelot muse
at me;

Gawain, who bade a thousand fare-
wells to me,

Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bade
me one.

And there the King will know me
and my love,

And there the Queen herself will pity
me,

And all the gentle court will welcome
me,

And after my long voyage I shall rest!'

'Peace,' said her father, 'O my
child, ye seem

Light-headed, for what force is yours
to go

So far, being sick? and wherefore
would ye look

On this proud fellow again, who scorns
us all?'

Then the rough Torre began to
heave and move,
And bluster into stormy sobs and-
say:

'I never loved him; an I meet with
him, ¹⁰⁶¹
I care not howsoever great he be,
Then will I strike at him and strike
him down.
Give me good fortune, I will strike
him dead,
For this discomfort he hath done the
house.'

To whom the gentle sister made
reply:
'Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor
be wroth,
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault
Not to love me than it is mine to love
Him of all men who seems to me the
highest.' ¹⁰⁷⁰

'Highest?' the father answer'd,
echoing 'highest?' —
He meant to break the passion in her
— 'nay,
Daughter, I know not what you call
the highest;
But this I know, for all the people
know it,
He loves the Queen, and in an open
shame,
And she returns his love in open shame;
If this be high, what is it to be low?'

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:
'Sweet father, all too faint and sick
am I
For anger. These are slanders; never
yet ¹⁰⁸⁰
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.
He makes no friend who never made
a foe.
But now it is my glory to have loved
One peerless, without stain; so let me
pass,
My father, howsoe'er I seem to you.
Not all unhappy, having loved God's
best
And greatest, tho' my love had no re-
turn.
Yet, seeing you desire your child to
live,
Thanks, but you work against your
own desire,
For if I could believe the things you
say ¹⁰⁹⁰
I should but die the sooner; wherefore
cease,

Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly
man
Hither, and let me shrive me clean
and die.'

So when the ghostly man had come
and gone,
She, with a face bright as for sin for-
given,
Besought Lavaine to write as she de-
vised
A letter, word for word; and when he
ask'd,
'Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear
lord?
Then will I bear it gladly;' she re-
plied,
'For Lancelot and the Queen and all
the world, ¹¹⁰⁰
But I myself must bear it.' Then he
wrote
The letter she devised; which being
writ
And folded, 'O sweet father, tender
and true,
Deny me not,' she said — 'ye never yet
Denied my fancies — this, however
strange,
My latest. Lay the letter in my hand
A little ere I die, and close the hand
Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.
And when the heat has gone from out
my heart,
Then take the little bed on which I died
For Lancelot's love, and deck it like
the Queen's ¹¹¹¹
For richness, and me also like the
Queen
In all I have of rich, and lay me on
it.
And let there be prepared a chariot-
bier
To take me to the river, and a barge
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
I go in state to court, to meet the
Queen.
There surely I shall speak for mine
own self,
And none of you can speak for me so
well.
And therefore let our dumb old man
alone ¹¹²⁰
Go with me; he can steer and row,
and he
Will guide me to that palace, to the
doors.'

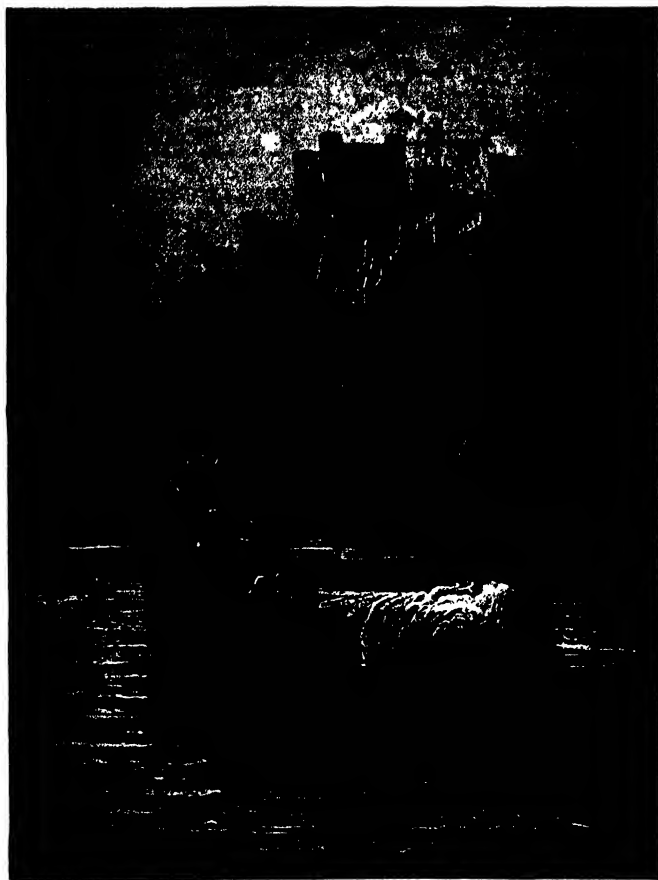
She ceased. Her father promised ;
 whereupon
 She grew so cheerful that they deem'd
 her death
 Was rather in the fantasy than the
 blood.
 But ten slow mornings past, and on
 the eleventh
 Her father laid the letter in her hand,
 And closed the hand upon it, and she
 died.
 So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from
 underground, 1130
 Then, those two brethren slowly with
 bent brows
 Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier
 Past like a shadow thro' the field, that
 shone
 Full-summer, to that stream whereon
 the barge,
 Pall'd all its length in blackest samite,
 lay.
 There sat the lifelong creature of the
 house,
 Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
 Winking his eyes, and twisted all his
 face.
 So those two brethren from the chariot
 took
 And on the black decks laid her in her
 bed, 1140
 Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung
 The silken case with braided blazon-
 ings,
 And kiss'd her quiet brows, and say-
 ing to her,
 'Sister, farewell forever,' and again,
 'Farewell, sweet sister,' parted all in
 tears.
 Then rose the dumb old servitor, and
 the dead,
 Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with
 the flood—
 In her right hand the lily, in her left
 The letter—all her bright hair stream-
 ing down—
 And all the coverlid was cloth of
 gold 1150
 Drawn to her waist, and she herself in
 white
 All but her face, and that clear-fea-
 tured face
 Was lovely, for she did not seem as
 dead,

But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she
 smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace
 craved
 Audience of Guinevere, to give at last
 The price of half a realm, his costly
 gift,
 Hard-won and hardly won with bruise
 and blow,
 With deaths of others, and almost his
 own,
 The nine-years-fought-for diamonds ;
 for he saw 1160
 One of her house, and sent him to the
 Queen
 Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen
 agreed
 With such and so unmoved a majesty
 She might have seem'd her statue, but
 that he,
 Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd
 her feet
 For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye
 The shadow of some piece of pointed
 lace,
 In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the
 walls,
 And parted, laughing in his courtly
 heart.

All in an oriel on the summerside, 1170
 Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward
 the stream,
 They met, and Lancelot kneeling
 utter'd: 'Queen,
 Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,
 Take, what I had not won except for
 you,
 These jewels, and make me happy,
 making them
 An armlet for the roundest arm on
 earth,
 Or necklace for a neck to which the
 swan's
 Is tawnier than her cygnet's. These
 are words;
 Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin
 In speaking, yet O, grant my worship
 of it 1180
 Words, as we grant grief tears. Such
 sin in words
 Perchance, we both can pardon; but,
 my Queen,
 I hear of rumors flying thro' your
 court.



'She did not seem as dead,
But fast asleep'

Our bond, as not the bond of man and
wife,
Should have in it an absoluter trust
To make up that defect : let rumors be.
When did not rumors fly ? these, as I
trust
That you trust me in your own noble-
ness,
I may not well believe that you believe.'

While thus he spoke, half turn'd
away, the Queen

1190

Brake from the vast oriel-embowering
vine
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast
them off,
Till all the place whereon she stood
was green ;
Then, when he ceased, in one cold pas-
sive hand
Received at once and laid aside the
gems
There on a table near her, and re-
plied :

'It may be I am quicker of belief
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the
Lake.

Our bond is not the bond of man and
wife.

This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill, ¹²⁰⁰
It can be broken easier. I for you
This many a year have done despite
and wrong

To one whom ever in my heart of
hearts

I did acknowledge nobler. What are
these?

Diamonds for me! they had been thrice
their worth

Being your gift, had you not lost your
own.

To loyal hearts the value of all gifts
Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!
For her! for your new fancy. Only
this

Grant me, I pray you; have your joys
apart. ¹²¹⁰

I doubt not that, however changed,
you keep

So much of what is graceful; and my-
self

Would shun to break those bounds of
courtesy

In which as Arthur's Queen I move
and rule,

So cannot speak my mind. An end to
this!

A strange one! yet I take it with
Amen.

So pray you, add my diamonds to her
pearls;

Deck her with these; tell her, she
shines me down:

An armlet for an arm to which the
Queen's

Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck ¹²²⁰
O, as much fairer — as a faith once fair

Was richer than these diamonds — hers
not mine —

Nay, by the mother of our Lord him-
self,

Or hers or mine, mine now to work my
will —

She shall not have them.'

Saying which she seized,
And, thro' the casement standing wide
for heat,
Flung them, and down they flash'd,
and smote the stream.

Then from the smitten surface flash'd,
as it were,

Diamonds to meet them, and they past
away.

Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half
disdain ¹²³⁰

At love, life, all things, on the window
ledge,

Close underneath his eyes, and right
across

Where these had fallen, slowly past
the barge

Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest
night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not,
burst away

To weep and wail in secret; and the
barge,

On to the palace-doorway sliding,
paused.

There two stood arm'd, and kept the
door; to whom,

All up the marble stair, tier over
tier, ¹²⁴⁰

Were added mouths that gaped, and
eyes that ask'd,

'What is it?' but that oarsman's hag-
gard face,

As hard and still as is the face that
men

Shape to their fancy's eye from broken
rocks

On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and
they said:

'He is enchanted, cannot speak — and
she,

Look how she sleeps — the Fairy
Queen, so fair!

Yea, but how pale! what are they?
flesh and blood?

Or come to take the King to Fairyland?
For some do hold our Arthur cannot
die, ¹²⁵⁰

But that he passes into Fairyland.'

While thus they babbled of the King,
the King

Came girt with knights. Then turn'd
the tongueless man

From the half-face to the full eye, and
rose

And pointed to the damsel and the
doors.

So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale

And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the
maid;
And reverently they bore her into
hall.
Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd at her,
And Lancelot later came and mused at
her, ¹²⁶⁰
And last the Queen herself, and pitied
her;
But Arthur spied the letter in her
hand,
Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it;
this was all:

'Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the
Lake,
I, sometimes call'd the maid of Astolat,
Come, for you left me taking no fare-
well,
Hither, to take my last farewell of
you.
I loved you, and my love had no re-
turn,
And therefore my true love has been
my death.
And therefore to our Lady Guine-
vere, ¹²⁷⁰
And to all other ladies, I make moan:
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
Pray for my soul thou too, Sir Lancelot,
As thou art a knight peerless.'

Thus he read;
And ever in the reading lords and
dames
Wept, looking often from his face who
read
To hers which lay so silent, and at
times,
So touch'd were they, half-thinking
that her lips
Who had devised the letter moved
again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to
them all: ¹²⁸⁰
'My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that
hear,
Know that for this most gentle maid-
en's death
Right heavy am I; for good she was
and true,
But loved me with a love beyond all
love
In women, whomsoever I have known.

Yet to be loved makes not to love
again;
Not at my years, however it hold in
youth.
I swear by truth and knighthood that
I gave
No cause, not willingly, for such a
love.
To this I call my friends in testi-
mony, ¹²⁹⁰
Her brethren, and her father, who
himself
Besought me to be plain and blunt,
and use,
To break her passion, some discourtesy
Against my nature; what I could, I
did.
I left her and I bade her no farewell;
Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would
have died,
I might have put my wits to some
rough use,
And help'd her from herself.'

Then said the Queen —
Sea was her wrath, yet working after
storm:
'Ye might at least have done her so
much grace, ¹³⁰⁰
Fair lord, as would have help'd her
from her death.'
He raised his head, their eyes met and
hers fell,
He adding: 'Queen, she would not be
content
Save that I wedded her, which could
not be.
Then might she follow me thro' the
world, she ask'd;
It could not be. I told her that her
love
Was but the flash of youth, would
darken down,
To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
Toward one more worthy of her —
then would I,
More specially were he she wedded
poor, ¹³¹⁰
Estate them with large land and terri-
tory
In mine own realm beyond the narrow
seas,
To keep them in all joyance. More
than this
I could not; this she would not, and
she died.'

He pausing, Arthur answer'd: 'O
my knight,
It will be to thy worship, as my
knight,
And mine, as head of all our Table
Round,
To see that she be buried worshipfully.

So toward that shrine which then in
all the realm
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly
went ¹³²⁰
The marshall'd Order of their Table
Round,

And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to
see

The maiden buried, not as one un-
known,
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obse-
quies,
And mass, and rolling music, like a
queen.

And when the knights had laid her
comely head

Low in the dust of half-forgotten
kings,

Then Arthur spake among them: 'Let
her tomb

Be costly, and her image thereupon,
And let the shield of Lancelot at her
feet ¹³³⁰

Be carven, and her lily in her hand.
And let the story of her dolorous voy-
age

For all true hearts be blazon'd on her
tomb

In letters gold and azure!' which was
wrought

Thereafter; but when now the lords
and dames

And people, from the high door stream-
ing, brake

Disorderly, as homeward each, the
Queen,

Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he
moved apart,

Drew near, and sigh'd in passing,
'Lancelot,

Forgive me; mine was jealousy in
love.' ¹³⁴⁰

He answer'd with his eyes upon the
ground,

'That is love's curse; pass on, my
Queen, forgiven.'

But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy
brows,

Approach'd him, and with full affec-
tion said:

'Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in
whom I have

Most joy and most affiance, for I
know

What thou hast been in battle by my
side,

And many a time have watch'd thee at
the tilt

Strike down the lusty and long prac-
tised knight

And let the younger and unskill'd go
by ¹³⁵⁰

To win his honor and to make his
name,

And loved thy courtesies and thee, a
man

Made to be loved; but now I would to
God,

Seeing the homeless trouble in thine
eyes,

Thou couldst have loved this maiden,
shaped, it seems,

By God for thee alone, and from her
face,

If one may judge the living by the
dead,

Delicately pure and marvellously fair,
Who might have brought thee, now a
lonely man

Wifeless and heirless, noble issue,
sons ¹³⁶⁰

Born to the glory of thy name and
fame,

My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of
the Lake.'

Then answer'd Lancelot: 'Fair she
was, my King,

Pure, as you ever wish your knights
to be.

To doubt her fairness were to want an
eye,

To doubt her pureness were to want a
heart—

Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy
love

Could bind him, but free love will not
be bound.'

'Free love, so bound, were freest,'
said the King.

'Let love be free; free love is for the
best. ¹³⁷⁰

And, after heaven, on our dull side of death,
 What should be best, if not so pure a love
 Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee
 She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,
 Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know.'

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but he went,
 And at the inrunning of a little brook
 Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd
 The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes
 And saw the barge that brought her moving down, ¹³⁸⁰
 Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said
 Low in himself: 'Ah, simple heart and sweet,
 Yelov'd me, damsel, surely with a love
 Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul?
 Ay, that will I. Farewell too—now at last—
 Farewell, fair lily. "Jealousy in love?"
 Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous pride?
 Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,
 May not your crescent fear for name and fame
 Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes? ¹³⁹⁰
 Why did the King dwell on my name to me?
 Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach,
 Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake
 Caught from his mother's arms—the wondrous one
 Who passes thro' the vision of the night—
 She chanted snatches of mysterious hymns
 Heard on the winding waters, eve and morn
 She kiss'd me, saying, "Thou art fair, my child,
 As a king's son," and often in her arms
 She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere. ¹⁴⁰⁰

Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er it be!
 For what am I? what profits me my name
 Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and have it.
 Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain;
 Now grown a part of me; but what use in it?
 To make men worse by making my sin known?
 Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?
 Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man
 Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must break
 These bonds that so defame me. Not without ¹⁴¹⁰
 She wills it—would I, if she will'd it? nay,
 Who knows? but if I would not, then may God,
 I pray him, send a sudden angel down
 To seize me by the hair and bear me far,
 And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,
 Among the tumbled fragments of the hills.'

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,
 Not knowing he should die a holy man.

THE HOLY GRAIL

FROM noiseful arms, and acts of prowess done
 In tournament or tilt, Sir Percivale
 Whom Arthur and his knighthood call'd the Pure,
 Had past into the silent life of prayer.
 Praise, fast, and alms; and leaving for the cowl
 The helmet in an abbey far away
 From Camelot, there, and not long after, died.

And one, a fellow-monk among the rest,
 Ambrosio, loved him much beyond the rest,

And honor'd him, and wrought into
his heart¹⁰
A way by love that waken'd love
within,
To answer that which came; and as
they sat
Beneath a world-old yew-tree, darken-
ing half
The cloisters, on a gustful April morn
That puff'd the swaying branches into
smoke
Above them, ere the summer when he
died,
The monk Ambrosius question'd Per-
civale:

'O brother, I have seen this yew-
tree smoke,
Spring after spring, for half a hundred
years;
For never have I known the world
without,²⁰
Nor ever stray'd beyond the pale.
But thee,
When first thou camest — such a cour-
tesy
Spake thro' the limbs and in the voice
— I knew
For one of those who eat in Arthur's
hall;
For good ye are and bad, and like to
coins,
Some true, some light, but every one
of you
Stamp'd with the image of the King;
and now
Tell me, what drove thee from the
Table Round,
My brother? was it earthly passion
crost?'

'Nay,' said the knight; 'for no such
passion mine.³⁰
But the sweet vision of the Holy Grail
Drove me from all vainglories, rival-
ries,
And earthly heats that spring and
sparkle out
Among us in the jousts, while women
watch
Who wins, who falls, and waste the
spiritual strength
Within us, better offer'd up to heaven.'

To whom the monk: 'The Holy
Grail! — I trust

We are green in Heaven's eyes; but
here too much
We moulder — as to things without I
mean —
Yet one of your own knights, a guest
of ours,⁴⁰
Told us of this in our refectory,
But spake with such a sadness and so
low
We heard not half of what he said.
What is it?
The phantom of a cup that comes and
goes?'

'Nay, monk! what phantom?' an-
swer'd Percivale.
'The cup, the cup itself, from which
our Lord
Drank at the last sad supper with his
own.
This, from the blessed land of Aro-
mat —
After the day of darkness, when the
dead
Went wandering o'er Moriah — the
good saint⁵⁰
Arimathæan Joseph, journeying
brought
To Glastonbury, where the winter
thorn
Blossoms at Christmas, mindful of our
Lord.
And there awhile it bode; and if a man
Could touch or see it, he was heal'd at
once,
By faith, of all his ills. But then the
times
Grew to such evil that the holy cup
Was caught away to heaven, and dis-
appear'd.'

To whom the monk: 'From our old
books I know
That Joseph came of old to Glaston-
bury,⁶⁰
And there the heathen Prince, Arvir-
agus,
Gave him an isle of marsh whereon to
build;
And there he built with wattles from
the marsh
A little lonely church in days of yore,
For so they say, these books of ours,
but seem
Mute of this miracle, far as I have
read.

But who first saw the holy thing to-day ?

'A woman,' answer'd Percivale, 'a nun,
And one no further off in blood from me
Than sister; and if ever holy maid ⁷⁰
With knees of adoration wore the stone,
A holy maid; tho' never maiden glow'd,
But that was in her earlier maidenhood,
With such a fervent flame of human love,
Which, being rudely blunted, glanced and shot
Only to holy things; to prayer and praise
She gave herself, to fast and alms.
And yet,
Nun as she was, the scandal of the Court,
Sin against Arthur and the Table Round,
And the strange sound of an adulterous race, ⁸⁰
Across the iron grating of her cell
Beat, and she pray'd and fasted all the more.

'And he to whom she told her sins, or what
Her all but utter whiteness held for sin,
A man wellnigh a hundred winters old,
Spake often with her of the Holy Grail,
A legend handed down thro' five or six,
And each of these a hundred winters old,
From our Lord's time. And when King Arthur made
His Table Round, and all men's hearts became ⁹⁰
Clean for a season, surely he had thought
That now the Holy Grail would come again;
But sin broke out. Ah, Christ, that it would come,
And heal the world of all their wickedness!
"O Father!" ask'd the maiden,
"might it come
To me by prayer and fasting?"
"Nay," said he,

"I know not, for thy heart is pure as snow."

And so she pray'd and fasted, till the sun
Shone, and the wind blew, thro' her, and I thought
She might have risen and floated when I saw her. ¹⁰⁰

'For on a day she sent to speak with me.
And when she came to speak, behold her eyes
Beyond my knowing of them, beautiful,
Beyond all knowing of them, wonderful,
Beautiful in the light of holiness!
And "O my brother Percivale," she said,
"Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy Grail;
For, waked at dead of night, I heard a sound
As of a silver horn from o'er the hills
Blown, and I thought, 'It is not Arthur's use ¹¹⁰
To hunt by moonlight.' And the slender sound
As from a distance beyond distance grew
Coming upon me—O never harp nor horn,
Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch with hand,
Was like that music as it came; and then
Stream'd thro' my cell a cold and silver beam,
And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail,
Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,
Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed
With rosy colors leaping on the wall;
And then the music faded, and the Grail ¹²¹
Past, and the beam decay'd, and from the walls
The rosy quiverings died into the night.
So now the Holy Thing is here again
Among us, brother, fast thou too and pray,
And tell thy brother knights to fast and pray,

That so perchance the vision may be
seen
By thee and those, and all the world
be heal'd."

'Then leaving the pale nun, I spake
of this
To all men; and myself fasted and
pray'd¹³⁰
Always, and many among us many a
week
Fasted and pray'd even to the utter-
most,
Expectant of the wonder that would
be.

'And one there was among us, ever
moved
Among us in white armor, Galahad.
"God make thee good as thou art
beautiful!"
Said Arthur, when he dubb'd him
knight, and none
In so young youth was ever made a
knight
Till Galahad; and this Galahad, when
he heard
My sister's vision, fill'd me with amaze;
His eyes became so like her own, they
seem'd¹⁴¹
Hers, and himself her brother more
than I.

Sister or brother none had he; but
some
Call'd him a son of Lancelot, and some
said
Begotten by enchantment — chattering
they,
Like birds of passage piping up and
down,
That gape for flies — we know not
whence they come;
For when was Lancelot wanderingly
lewd?

'But she, the wan sweet maiden,
shore away
Clean from her forehead all that wealth
of hair¹⁵⁰
Which made a silken mat-work for her
feet;
And out of this she plaited broad and
long
A strong sword-belt, and wove with
silver thread

And crimson in the belt a strange de-
vice,

A crimson grail within a silver beam;
And saw the bright boy-knight, and
bound it on him,

Saying: "My knight, my love, my
knight of heaven,

O thou, my love, whose love is one
with mine,

I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind
my belt.

Go forth, for thou shalt see what I
have seen,¹⁶⁰

And break thro' all, till one will crown
thee king

Far in the spiritual city;" and as she
spake

She sent the deathless passion in her
eyes

Thro' him, and made him hers, and
laid her mind

On him, and he believed in her belief.

'Then came a year of miracle. O
brother,

In our great hall there stood a vacant
chair,

Fashion'd by Merlin ere he past away,
And carven with strange figures; and
in and out

The figures, like a serpent, ran a scroll
Of letters in a tongue no man could
read.¹⁷¹

And Merlin call'd it "the Siege Peril-
ous,"

Perilous for good and ill; "for there,"
he said,

"No man could sit but he should lose
himself."

And once by misadvertence Merlin sat
In his own chair, and so was lost; but
he,

Galahad, when he heard of Merlin's
doom,

Cried, "If I lose myself, I save my-
self!"

'Then on a summer night it came
to pass,

While the great banquet lay along
the hall,¹⁸⁰

That Galahad would sit down in Mer-
lin's chair.

'And all at once, as there we sat,
we heard

A cracking and a riving of the roofs,
And rending, and a blast, and overhead
Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.
And in the blast there smote along the
hall

A beam of light seven times more
clear than day;
And down the long beam stole the
Holy Grail

All over cover'd with a luminous cloud,
And none might see who bare it, and
it past. ¹⁹⁰

But every knight beheld his fellow's
face

As in a glory, and all the knights
arose,

And staring each at other like dumb
men

Stood, till I found a voice and sware
a vow.

'I sware a vow before them all,
that I,

Because I had not seen the Grail,
would ride

A twelvemonth and a day in quest of
it,

Until I found and saw it, as the nun
My sister saw it; and Galahad sware
the vow,

And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's
cousin, sware, ²⁰⁰

And Lancelot sware, and many among
the knights,

And Gawain sware, and louder than
the rest.'

Then spake the monk Ambrosius,
asking him,

'What said the King? Did Arthur
take the vow?'

'Nay, for my lord,' said Percivale,
'the King,

Was not in hall; for early that same
day,

Scaped thro' a cavern from a bandit
bold,

An outraged maiden sprang into the
hall

Crying on help; for all her shining
hair

Was smear'd with earth, and either
milky arm ²¹⁰

Red-vent with hooks of bramble, and
all she wore

Torn as a sail that leaves the rope is
torn

In tempest. So the King arose and
went

To smoke the scandalous hive of those
wild bees

That made such honey in his realm.
Howbeit

Some little of this marvel he too saw,
Returning o'er the plain that then
began

To darken under Camelot; whence
the King

Look'd up, calling aloud, "Lo, there!
the roofs

Of our great hall are roll'd in thunder-
smoke! ²²⁰

Pray heaven, they be not smitten by
the bolt!"

For dear to Arthur was that hall of
ours,

As having there so oft with all his
knights

Feasted, and as the stateliest under
heaven.

'O brother, had you known our
mighty hall,

Which Merlin built for Arthur long
ago!

For all the sacred mount of Camelot,
And all the dim rich city, roof by roof,

Tower after tower, spire beyond spire,
By grove, and garden-lawn, and rush-

ing brook, ²³⁰
Climbs to the mighty hall that Merlin
built.

And four great zones of sculpture, set
betwixt

With many a mystic symbol, gird the
hall;

And in the lowest beasts are slaying
men,

And in the second men are slaying
beasts,

And on the third are warriors, perfect
men,

And on the fourth are men with
growing wings,

And over all one statue in the mould
Of Arthur, made by Merlin, with a
crown,

And peak'd wings pointed to the
Northern Star. ²⁴⁰

And eastward fronts the statue, and
the crown

And both the wings are made of gold,
and flame

At sunrise till the people in far fields,
Wasted so often by the heathen hordes,
Behold it, crying, "We have still a
king."

'And, brother, had you known our
hall within,
Broader and higher than any in all
the lands!

Where twelve great windows blazon
Arthur's wars,
And all the light that falls upon the
board

Streams thro' the twelve great battles
of our King. ²⁵⁰

Nay, one there is, and at the eastern
end,

Wealthy with wandering lines of
mount and mere,

Where Arthur finds the brand Excali-
bur.

And also one to the west, and counter
to it,

And blank; and who shall blazon it?
when and how?—

O, there, perchance, when all our
wars are done,

The brand Excalibur will be cast
away!

'So to this hall full quickly rode
the King,

In horror lest the work by Merlin
wrought,

Dreamlike, should on the sudden van-
ish, wrapt ²⁶⁰

In unremorseful folds of rolling fire.
And in he rode, and up I glanced,

and saw
The golden dragon sparkling over all;

And many of those who burnt the
hold, their arms

Hack'd, and their foreheads grimed
with smoke and sear'd,

Follow'd, and in among bright faces,
ours,

Full of the vision, prest; and then the
King

Spake to me, being nearest, "Perci-
vale,"—

Because the hall was all in tumult—
some

Vowing, and some protesting,—
"What is this?" ²⁷⁰

'O brother, when I told him what
had chanced,

My sister's vision and the rest, his face
Darken'd, as I have seen it more than
once,

When some brave deed seem'd to be
done in vain,

Darken; and "Woe is me, my knights,"
he cried,

"Had I been here, ye had not sworn
the vow."

Bold was mine answer, "Had thyself
been here,

My King, thou wouldst have sworn."
"Yea, yea," said he,

"Art thou so bold and hast not seen
the Grail?"

"Nay, lord, I heard the sound, I
saw the light, ²⁸⁰

But since I did not see the holy thing,
I swear a vow to follow it till I saw."

'Then when he ask'd us, knight by
knight, if any

Had seen it, all their answers were as
one:

"Nay, lord, and therefore have we
sworn our vows."

"Lo, now," said Arthur, "have
ye seen a cloud?

What go ye into the wilderness to
see?"

'Then Galahad on the sudden, and
in a voice

Shrilling along the hall to Arthur,
call'd,

"But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy
Grail, ²⁹⁰

I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry—
'O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow
me!'"

"Ah, Galahad, Galahad," said the
King, "for such

As thou art is the vision, not for these.
Thy holy nun and thou have seen a
sign—

Holier is none, my Percivale, than
she—

A sign to maim this Order which I
made.

But ye that follow but the leader's
bell."

Brother, the King was hard upon his
 knights, —
 "Taliessin is our fullest throat of
 song, ³⁰⁰
 And one hath sung and all the dumb
 will sing.
 Lancelot is Lancelot, and hath over-
 borne
 Five knights at once, and every
 younger knight,
 Unproven, holds himself as Lancelot,
 Till overborne by one, he learns —
 and ye,
 What are ye? Galahads? — no, nor
 Percivales" —
 For thus it pleased the King to range
 me close
 After Sir Galahad; — "nay," said he,
 "but men
 With strength and will to right the
 wrong'd, of power
 To lay the sudden heads of violence
 flat, ³¹⁰
 Knights that in twelve great battles
 splash'd and dyed
 The strong White Horse in his own
 heathen blood —
 But one hath seen, and all the blind
 will see.
 Go, since your vows are sacred, being
 made.
 Yet — for ye know the cries of all my
 realm
 Pass thro' this hall — how often, O
 my knights,
 Your places being vacant at my side,
 This chance of noble deeds will come
 and go
 Unchallenged, while ye follow wan-
 dering fires
 Lost in the quagmire! Many of you,
 yea most, ³²⁰
 Return no more. Ye think I show
 myself
 Too dark a prophet. Come now, let
 us meet
 The morrow morn once more in one
 full field
 Of gracious pastime, that once more
 the King,
 Before ye leave him for this quest,
 may count
 The yet-unbroken strength of all his
 knights,
 Rejoicing in that Order which he
 made."

'So when the sun broke next from
 underground,
 All the great Table of our Arthur
 closed
 And clash'd in such a tourney and so
 full, ³³⁰
 So many lances broken — never yet
 Had Camelot seen the like since Ar-
 thur came;
 And I myself and Galahad, for a
 strength
 Was in us from the vision, overthrew
 So many knights that all the people
 cried,
 And almost burst the barriers in their
 heat,
 Shouting, "Sir Galahad and Sir Per-
 civale!"

'But when the next day brake from
 underground —
 O brother, had you known our Came-
 lot,
 Built by old kings, age after age, so
 old ³⁴⁰
 The King himself had fears that it
 would fall,
 So strange, and rich, and dim; for
 where the roofs
 Totter'd toward each other in the
 sky,
 Met foreheads all along the street of
 those
 Who watch'd us pass; and lower, and
 where the long
 Rich galleries, lady-laden, weigh'd
 the necks
 Of dragons clinging to the crazy walls,
 Thicker than drops from thunder,
 showers of flowers
 Fell as we past; and men and boys
 astride
 On wyvern, lion, dragon, griffin,
 swan, ³⁵⁰
 At all the corners, named us each by
 name,
 Calling "God speed!" but in the
 ways below
 The knights and ladies wept, and rich
 and poor
 Wept, and the King himself could
 hardly speak
 For grief, and all in middle street the
 Queen,
 Who rode by Lancelot, wail'd and
 shriek'd aloud,

"This madness has come on us for
our sins."
So to the Gate of the Three Queens
we came,
Where Arthur's wars are render'd
mystically,
And thence departed every one his
way. 360

'And I was lifted up in heart, and
thought
Of all my late-shown prowess in the
lists,
How my strong lance had beaten down
the knights,
So many and famous names; and
never yet
Had heaven appear'd so blue, nor
earth so green,
For all my blood danced in me, and I
knew
That I should light upon the Holy
Grail.

'Thereafter, the dark warning of
our King,
That most of us would follow wan-
dering fires,
Came like a driving gloom across my
mind. 370
Then every evil word I had spoken
once,
And every evil thought I had thought
of old,
And every evil deed I ever did,
Awoke and cried, "This quest is not
for thee."
And lifting up mine eyes, I found
myself
Alone, and in a land of sand and
thorns,
And I was thirsty even unto
death;
And I, too, cried, "This quest is not
for thee."

'And on I rode, and when I thought
my thirst
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and
then a brook, 380
With one sharp rapid, where the crisp-
ing white
Play'd ever back upon the sloping
wave
And took both ear and eye; and o'er
the brook

Were apple-trees, and apples by the
brook
Fallen, and on the lawns. "I will
rest here,"
I said, "I am not worthy of the
quest;"
But even while I drank the brook, and
ate
The goodly apples, all these things at
once
Fell into dust, and I was left alone
And thirsting in a land of sand and
thorns. 390

'And then behold a woman at a
door
Spinning; and fair the house whereby
she sat,
And kind the woman's eyes and inno-
cent,
And all her bearing gracious; and she
rose
Opening her arms to meet me, as who
should say,
"Rest here;" but when I touch'd her,
lo! she, too,
Fell into dust and nothing, and the
house
Became no better than a broken
shed,
And in it a dead babe; and also
this
Fell into dust, and I was left alone.

'And on I rode, and greater was
my thirst. 401
Then flash'd a yellow gleam across the
world,
And where it smote the plowshare in
the field
The plowman left his plowing and
fell down
Before it; where it glitter'd on her
pail
The milkmaid left her milking and
fell down
Before it, and I knew not why, but
thought
"The sun is rising," tho' the sun had
risen.
Then was I ware of one that on me
moved
In golden armor with a crown of
gold
About a casque all jewels, and his
horse 411

In golden armor jewelled everywhere;
 And on the splendor came, flashing
 me blind,
 And seem'd to me the lord of all the
 world,
 Being so huge. But when I thought
 he meant
 To crush me, moving on me, lo ! he,
 too,
 Open'd his arms to embrace me as he
 came,
 And up I went and touch'd him, and
 he, too,
 Fell into dust, and I was left alone
 And wearying in a land of sand and
 thorns. 420

'And I rode on and found a mighty
 hill,
 And on the top a city wall'd ; the
 spires
 Prick'd with incredible pinnacles into
 heaven.
 And by the gateway stirr'd a crowd ;
 and these
 Cried to me climbing, "Welcome,
 Percivale !
 Thou mightiest and thou purest among
 men !"
 And glad was I and clomb, but found
 at top
 No man, nor any voice. And thence
 I past
 Far thro' a ruinous city, and I saw
 That man had once dwelt there ; but
 there I found 430
 Only one man of an exceeding age.
 "Where is that goodly company,"
 said I,
 "That so cried out upon me?" and
 he had
 Scarce any voice to answer, and yet
 gasp'd,
 "Whence and what art thou?" and
 even as he spoke
 Fell into dust and disappear'd, and I
 Was left alone once more and cried in
 grief,
 "Lo, if I find the Holy Grail itself
 And touch it, it will crumble into
 dust !"

'And thence I dropt into a lowly
 vale, 440
 Low as the hill was high, and where
 the vale

Was lowest found a chapel, and there-
 by
 A holy hermit in a hermitage,
 To whom I told my phantoms, and he
 said :

"O son, thou hast not true humil-
 ity,
 The highest virtue, mother of them
 all ;
 For when the Lord of all things made
 Himself
 Naked of glory for His mortal change,
 'Take thou my robe,' she said, 'for all
 is thine,'
 And all her form shone forth with
 sudden light 450
 So that the angels were amazed, and
 she
 Follow'd Him down, and like a flying
 star
 Led on the gray-hair'd wisdom of the
 east.
 But her thou hast not known ; for
 what is this
 Thou thoughtest of thy prowess and
 thy sins ?
 Thou hast not lost thyself to save thy-
 self
 As Galahad." When the hermit made
 an end,
 In silver armor suddenly Galahad
 shone
 Before us, and against the chapel door
 Laid lance and enter'd, and we knelt in
 prayer. 460
 And there the hermit slaked my burn-
 ing thirst,
 And at the sacring of the mass I saw
 The holy elements alone ; but he,
 "Saw ye no more ? I, Galahad, saw
 the Grail,
 The Holy Grail, descend upon the
 shrine.
 I saw the fiery face as of a child
 That smote itself into the bread and
 went ;
 And hither am I come ; and never
 yet
 Hath what thy sister taught me first
 to see,
 This holy thing, fail'd from my side,
 nor come 470
 Cover'd, but moving with me night
 and day,
 Fainter by day, but always in the night

Blood-red, and sliding down the black-
 en'd marsh
 Blood-red, and on the naked mountain
 top
 Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere
 below
 Blood-red. And in the strength of
 this I rode,
 Shattering all evil customs every-
 where,
 And past thro' Pagan realms, and
 made them mine,
 And clash'd with Pagan hordes, and
 bore them down,
 And broke thro' all, and in the strength
 of this ⁴⁸⁰
 Come victor. But my time is hard at
 hand,
 And hence I go, and one will crown
 me king
 Far in the spiritual city; and come
 thou, too,
 For thou shalt see the vision when I
 go."

'While thus he spake, his eye,
 dwelling on mine,
 Drew me, with power upon me, till I
 grew
 One with him, to believe as he be-
 lieved.
 Then, when the day began to wane, we
 went.

'There rose a hill that none but man
 could climb,
 Scarr'd with a hundred wintry water-
 courses— ⁴⁹⁰
 Storm at the top, and when we gain'd
 it, storm
 Round us and death; for every mo-
 ment glanced
 His silver arms and gloom'd, so quick
 and thick
 The lightnings here and there to left
 and right
 Struck, till the dry old trunks about
 us, dead,
 Yea, rotten with a hundred years of
 death,
 Sprang into fire. And at the base we
 found
 On either hand, as far as eye could
 see,
 A great black swamp and of an evil
 smell,

Part black, part whiten'd with the
 bones of men, ⁵⁰⁰
 Not to be crost, save that some an-
 cient king
 Had built a way, where, link'd with
 many a bridge,
 A thousand piers ran into the great
 Sea.
 And Galahad fled along them bridge
 by bridge,
 And every bridge as quickly as he
 crost
 Sprang into fire and vanish'd, tho' I
 yearn'd
 To follow; and thrice above him all
 the heavens
 Open'd and blazed with thunder such
 as seem'd
 Shoutings of all the sons of God. And
 first
 At once I saw him far on the great
 Sea, ⁵¹⁰
 In silver-shining armor starry-clear;
 And o'er his head the Holy Vessel
 hung
 Clothed in white samite or a luminous
 cloud.
 And with exceeding swiftness ran the
 boat,
 If boat it were—I saw not whence it
 came.
 And when the heavens open'd and
 blazed again
 Roaring, I saw him like a silver star—
 And had he set the sail, or had the
 boat
 Become a living creature clad with
 wings?
 And o'er his head the Holy Vessel
 hung ⁵²⁰
 Redder than any rose, a joy to me,
 For now I knew the veil had been
 withdrawn.
 Then in a moment when they blazed
 again
 Opening, I saw the least of little stars
 Down on the waste, and straight be-
 yond the star
 I saw the spiritual city and all her
 spires
 And gateways in a glory like one
 pearl—
 No larger, tho' the goal of all the
 saints—
 Strike from the sea; and from the star
 there shot

A rose-red sparkle to the city, and
 there⁵³⁰
 Dwelt, and I knew it was the Holy
 Grail,
 Which never eyes on earth again shall
 see.
 Then fell the floods of heaven drown-
 ing the deep,
 And how my feet recrost the deathful
 ridge
 No memory in me lives; but that I
 touch'd
 The chapel-doors at dawn I know, and
 thence
 Taking my war-horse from the holy
 man,
 Glad that no phantom vex't me more,
 return'd
 To whence I came, the gate of Arthur's
 wars.'

O brother,' ask'd Ambrosius, —
 'for in sooth⁵⁴⁰
 These ancient books — and they would
 win thee — teem,
 Only I find not there this Holy Grail,
 With miracles and marvels like to
 these,
 Not all unlike; which oftentime I
 read,
 Who read but on my breviary with
 ease,
 Till my head swims, and then go forth
 and pass
 Down to the little thorpe that lies so
 close,
 And almost plaster'd like a martin's
 nest
 To these old walls — and mingle with
 our folk;
 And knowing every honest face of
 theirs⁵⁵⁰
 As well as ever shepherd knew his
 sheep,
 And every homely secret in their
 hearts,
 Delight myself with gossip and old
 wives,
 And ills and aches, and teethings,
 lyings-in,
 And mirthful sayings, children of the
 place,
 That have no meaning half a league
 away;
 Or lulling random squabbles when
 they rise,

Chafferings and chatterings at the
 market-cross,
 Rejoice, small man, in this small world
 of mine,
 Yea, even in their hens and in their
 eggs —⁵⁶⁰
 O brother, saving this Sir Galahad,
 Came ye on none but phantoms in
 your quest,
 No man, no woman?'

Then Sir Percivale .
 'All men, to one so bound by such a
 vow,
 And women were as phantoms. O,
 my brother,
 Why wilt thou shame me to confess to
 thee
 How far I falter'd from my quest and
 vow?
 For after I had lain so many nights,
 A bed-mate of the snail and eft and
 snake,
 In grass and burdock, I was changed
 to wan⁵⁷⁰
 And meagre, and the vision had not
 come;
 And then I chanced upon a goodly
 town
 With one great dwelling in the middle
 of it.
 Thither I made, and there was I dis-
 arm'd
 By maidens each as fair as any flower;
 But when they led me into hall, behold,
 The princess of that castle was the one,
 Brother, and that one only, who had
 ever
 Made my heart leap; for when I
 moved of old⁵⁷⁹
 A slender page about her father's hall,
 And she a slender maiden, all my heart
 Went after her with longing, yet we
 twain
 Had never kiss'd a kiss or vow'd a vow.
 And now I came upon her once again,
 And one had wedded her, and he was
 dead,
 And all his land and wealth and state
 were hers.
 And while I tarried, every day she set
 A banquet richer than the day before
 By me, for all her longing and her will
 Was toward me as of old; till one fair
 morn,⁵⁹⁰
 I walking to and fro beside a stream

That flash'd across her orchard under-
neath

Her castle-walls, she stole upon my
walk,

And calling me the greatest of all
knights,

Embraced me, and so kiss'd me the
first time,

And gave herself and all her wealth to
me.

Then I remember'd Arthur's warning
word,

That most of us would follow wander-
ing fires,

And the quest faded in my heart.
Anon,

The heads of all her people drew to me,
With supplication both of knees and
tongue : 601

"We have heard of thee; thou art
our greatest knight,

Our Lady says it, and we well believe.
Wed thou our Lady, and rule over us,

And thou shalt be as Arthur in our
land."

O me, my brother! but one night my
vow

Burnt me within, so that I rose and
fled,

But wail'd and wept, and hated mine
own self,

And even the holy quest, and all but
her;

Then after I was join'd with Galahad
Cared not for her nor anything upon
earth.' 611

Then said the monk: 'Poor men,
when yule is cold,

Must be content to sit by little fires.

And this am I, so that ye care for me
Ever so little; yea, and blest be heaven

That brought thee here to this poor
house of ours

Where all the brethren are so hard, to
warm

My cold heart with a friend; but O
the pity

To find thine own first love once more
— to hold,

Hold her a wealthy bride within thine
arms, 620

Or all but hold, and then — cast her
aside,

Foregoing all her sweetness, like a
weed!

For we that want the warmth of
double life,

We that are plagued with dreams of
something sweet

Beyond all sweetness in a life so rich, —
Ah, blessed Lord, I speak too earthly-

wise,
Seeing I never stray'd beyond the
cell,

But live like an old badger in his earth,
With earth about him everywhere

despite
All fast and penance. Saw ye none be
side, 630

None of your knights?

'Yea, so,' said Percivale:
'One night my pathway swerving
east, I saw

The pelican on the casque of our Sir
Bors

All in the middle of the rising moon,
And toward him spur'd, and hail'd

him, and he me,
And each made joy of either. Then
he ask'd:

"Where is he? hast thou seen him —
Lancelot? — Once,"

Said good Sir Bors, "he dash'd across
me — mad,

And maddening what he rode; and
when I cried,

'Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest
So holy?' Lancelot shouted, 'Stay me
not! 641

I have been the sluggard, and I ride
apace,

For now there is a lion in the way!'
So vanish'd."

'Then Sir Bors had ridden on
Softly, and sorrowing for our Lance-
lot,

Because his former madness, once the
talk

And scandal of our table, had return'd;
For Lancelot's kith and kin so worship
him

That ill to him is ill to them, to Bors
Beyond the rest. He well had been
content 650

Not to have seen, so Lancelot might
have seen,

The Holy Cup of healing; and, indeed,
Being so clouded with his grief and
love,

Small heart was his after the holy quest.

If God would send the vision, well; if not,

The quest and he were in the hands of Heaven.

'And then, with small adventure met, Sir Bors

Rode to the lonest tract of all the realm,

And found a people there among their crags,

Our race and blood, a remnant that were left 660

Paynim amid their circles, and the stones

They pitch up straight to heaven; and their wise men

Were strong in that old magic which can trace

The wandering of the stars, and scoff'd at him

And this high quest as at a simple thing,

Told him he follow'd — almost Arthur's words —

A mocking fire: "what other fire than he

Whereby the blood beats, and the blossom blows,

And the sea rolls, and all the world is warm'd?"

And when his answer chafed them, the rough crowd, 670

Hearing he had a difference with their priests,

Seized him, and bound and plunged him into a cell

Of great piled stones; and lying bounden there

In darkness thro' innumerable hours

He heard the hollow-ringing heavens sweep

Over him till by miracle — what else? —

Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt and fell,

Such as no wind could move; and thro' the gap

Glimmer'd the streaming scud. Then came a night

Still as the day was loud, and thro' the gap 680

The seven clear stars of Arthur's Table

Round —

For, brother, so one night, because they roll

Thro' such a round in heaven, we named the stars,

Rejoicing in ourselves and in our King —

And these, like bright eyes of familiar friends,

In on him shone: "And then to me, to me,"

Said good Sir Bors, "beyond all hopes of mine,

Who scarce had pray'd or ask'd it for myself —

Across the seven clear stars — O grace to me! —

In color like the fingers of a hand 690

Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail Glided and past, and close upon it

peal'd A sharp quick thunder." Afterwards,

a maid, Who kept our holy faith among her kin

In secret, entering, loosed and let him go.

To whom the monk: 'And I remember now

That pelican on the casque. Sir Bors it was

Who spake so low and sadly at our board,

And mighty reverent at our grace was he;

A square-set man and honest, and his eyes, 700

An outdoor sign of all the warmth within,

Smiled with his lips — a smile beneath a cloud,

But heaven had meant it for a sunny one.

Ay, ay, Sir Bors, who else? But when ye reach'd

The city, found ye all your knights return'd,

Or was there sooth in Arthur's prophecy,

Tell me, and what said each, and what the King?'

Then answer'd Percivale: 'And that can I,

Brother, and truly; since the living words

Of so great men as Lancelot and our
King⁷¹⁰
Pass not from door to door and out
again,
But sit within the house. O, when
we reach'd
The city, our horses stumbling as they
trode
On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,
Crack'd basilisks, and splinter'd cock-
atrices,
And shatter'd talbots, which had left
the stones
Raw that they fell from, brought us
to the hall.

'And there sat Arthur on the dais-
throne,
And those that had gone out upon the
quest,
Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of
them,⁷²⁰
And those that had not, stood before
the King,
Who, when he saw me, rose and bade
me hail,
Saying: "A welfare in thine eyes re-
proves
Our fear of some disastrous chance
for thee
On hill or plain, at sea or flooding
ford.
So fierce a gale made havoc here of
late
Among the strange devices of our
kings,
Yea, shook this newer, stronger hall
of ours,
And from the statue Merlin moulded
for us
Half-wrench'd a golden wing; but
now — the quest,⁷³⁰
This vision — hast thou seen the Holy
Cup
That Joseph brought of old to Glas-
tonbury?"

'So when I told him all thyself hast
heard,
Ambrosius, and my fresh but fixt re-
solve
To pass away into the quiet life,
He answer'd not, but, sharply turn-
ing, ask'd
Of Gawain, "Gawain, was this quest
for thee?"

"Nay, lord," said Gawain, "not
for such as I.
Therefore I communed with a saintly
man,
Who made me sure the quest was not
for me;
For I was much a-wearied of the⁷⁴⁰
quest,
But found a silk pavilion in a field,
And merry maidens in it; and then
this gale
Tore my pavilion from the tenting-
pin,
And blew my merry maidens all about
With all discomfort; yea, and but for
this,
My twelvemonth and a day were plea-
sant to me."

'He ceased; and Arthur turn'd to
whom at first
He saw not, for Sir Bors, on entering,
push'd
Athwart the throng to Lancelot,
caught his hand,⁷⁵⁰
Held it, and there, half-hidden by
him, stood,
Until the King espied him, saying to
him,
"Hail, Bors! if ever loyal man and
true
Could see it, thou hast seen the
Grail;" and Bors,
"Ask me not, for I may not speak of
it;
I saw it;" and the tears were in his
eyes.

'Then there remain'd but Lance-
lot, for the rest
Spake but of sundry perils in the
storm.
Perhaps, like him of Cana in Holy
Writ,
Our Arthur kept his best until the
last;⁷⁶⁰
"Thou, too, my Lancelot," ask'd the
King, "my friend,
Our mightiest, hath this quest avail'd
for thee?"

"Our mightiest!" answer'd Lance-
lot, with a groan;
"O King!" — and when he paused
methought I spied
A dying fire of madness in his eyes —

"O King, my friend, if friend of thine
 I be,
 Happier are those that welter in their
 sin,
 Swine in the mud, that cannot see for
 slime,
 Sline of the ditch ; but in me lived a
 sin
 So strange, of such a kind, that all of
 pure, ⁷⁷⁰
 Noble, and knightly in me twined
 and clung
 Round that one sin, until the whole-
 some flower
 And poisonous grew together, each as
 each,
 Not to be pluck'd asunder ; and when
 thy knights
 Sware, I swear with them only in the
 hope
 That could I touch or see the Holy
 Grail
 They might be pluck'd asunder.
 Then I spake
 To one most holy saint, who wept and
 said
 That, save they could be pluck'd
 asunder, all
 My quest were but in vain ; to whom
 I vow'd ⁷⁸⁰
 That I would work according as he
 will'd.
 And forth I went, and while I yearn'd
 and strove
 To tear the twain asunder in my
 heart,
 My madness came upon me as of old,
 And whipt me into waste fields far
 away.
 There was I beaten down by little
 men,
 Mean knights, to whom the moving of
 my sword
 And shadow of my spear had been
 enow
 To scare them from me once ; and
 then I came
 All in my folly to the naked shore, ⁷⁹⁰
 Wide flats, where nothing but coarse
 grasses grew ;
 But such a blast, my King, began to
 blow,
 So loud a blast along the shore and
 sea,
 Ye could not hear the waters for the
 blast,

Tho' heapt in mounds and ridges all
 the sea
 Drove like a cataract, and all the sand
 Swept like a river, and the clouded
 heavens
 Were shaken with the motion and the
 sound.
 And blackening in the sea-foam
 sway'd a boat,
 Half-swallow'd in it, anchor'd with a
 chain ; ⁸⁰⁰
 And in my madness to myself I said,
 'I will embark and I will lose myself,
 And in the great sea wash away my
 sin.'
 I burst the chain, I sprang into the
 boat.
 Seven days I drove along the dreary
 deep,
 And with me drove the moon and all
 the stars ;
 And the wind fell, and on the seventh
 night
 I heard the shingle grinding in the
 surge,
 And felt the boat shock earth, and
 looking up,
 Behold, the enchanted towers of Car-
 bonek, ⁸¹⁰
 A castle like a rock upon a rock,
 With chasm-like portals open to the
 sea,
 And steps that met the breaker !
 There was none
 Stood near it but a lion on each side
 That kept the entry, and the moon
 was full.
 Then from the boat I leapt, and up
 the stairs,
 There drew my sword. With sudden-
 flaring manes
 Those two great beasts rose upright
 like a man,
 Each gript a shoulder, and I stood be-
 tween,
 And, when I would have smitten
 them, heard a voice, ⁸²⁰
 'Doubt not, go forward ; if thou
 doubt, the beasts
 Will tear thee piecemeal.' Then with
 violence
 The sword was dash'd from out my
 hand, and fell.
 And up into the sounding hall I past ;
 But nothing in the sounding hall I
 saw,

No bench nor table, painting on the wall
 Or shield of knight, only the rounded moon
 Thro' the tall oriel on the rolling sea.
 But always in the quiet house I heard,
 Clear as a lark, high o'er me as a lark,
 A sweet voice singing in the topmost tower ⁸³⁰
 To the eastward. Up I climb'd a thousand steps
 With pain; as in a dream I seem'd to climb
 For ever; at the last I reach'd a door,
 A light was in the crannies, and I heard,
 "Glory and joy and honor to our Lord
 And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail!"
 Then in my madness I essay'd the door;
 It gave, and thro' a stormy glare, a heat
 As from a seven-times-heated furnace, I, ⁸⁴⁰
 Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,
 With such a fierceness that I swoon'd away—
 O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,
 All pall'd in crimson samite, and around
 Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and eyes!
 And but for all my madness and my sin,
 And then my swooning, I had sworn I saw
 That which I saw; but what I saw was veil'd
 And cover'd, and this quest was not for me."

'So speaking, and here ceasing,
 Lancelot left ⁸⁵⁰
 The hall long silent, till Sir Gawain—
 nay,
 Brother, I need not tell thee foolish words,—
 A reckless and irreverent knight was he,
 Now bolden'd by the silence of his King,—
 Well, I will tell thee: "O King, my liege," he said,

"Hath Gawain fail'd in any quest of thine?
 When have I stinted stroke in foughten field?
 But as for thine, my good friend Percivale,
 Thy holy nun and thou have driven men mad,
 Yea, made our mightiest madder than our least. ⁸⁶⁰
 But by mine eyes and by mine ears I swear,
 I will be deafer than the blue-eyed cat,
 And thrice as blind as any noonday owl,
 To holy virgins in their ecstasies,
 Henceforward."

"Deafer," said the blameless King,
 "Gawain, and blinder unto holy things,
 Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,
 Being too blind to have desire to see.
 But if indeed there came a sign from heaven,
 Blessed are Bors, Lancelot, and Percivale, ⁸⁷⁰
 For these have seen according to their sight.
 For every fiery prophet in old times,
 And all the sacred madness of the bard,
 When God made music thro' them, could but speak
 His music by the framework and the chord;
 And as ye saw it ye have spoken truth.

"Nay—but thou errest, Lancelot; never yet
 Could all of true and noble in knight and man
 Twine round one sin, whatever it might be,
 With such a closeness but apart there grew, ⁸⁸⁰
 Save that he were the swine thou spakest of,
 Some root of knighthood and pure nobleness;
 Whereto see thou, that it may bear its flower.

"And spake I not too truly, O my knights?
 Was I too dark a prophet when I said

To those who went upon the Holy
Quest,
That most of them would follow wan-
dering fires,
Lost in the quagmire?—lost to me
and gone.
And left me gazing at a barren board,
And a lean Order—scarce return'd a
tithe—
And out of those to whom the vision⁸⁹⁰
came
My greatest hardly will believe he
saw.
Another hath beheld it afar off,
And, leaving human wrongs to right
themselves,
Cares but to pass into the silent life.
And one hath had the vision face to
face,
And now his chair desires him here in
vain,
However they may crown him other-
where.

“And some among you held that
if the King
Had seen the sight he would have
sworn the vow.⁹⁰⁰
Not easily, seeing that the King must
guard
That which he rules, and is but as the
hind
To whom a space of land is given to
plow,
Who may not wander from the allotted
field
Before his work be done, but, being
done,
Let visions of the night or of the
day
Come as they will; and many a time
they come,
Until this earth he walks on seems not
earth,
This light that strikes his eyeball is
not light,
This air that smites his forehead is
not air⁹¹⁰
But vision—yea, his very hand and
foot—
In moments when he feels he cannot
die,
And knows himself no vision to him-
self,
Nor the high God a vision, nor that
One

Who rose again. Ye have seen what
ye have seen.”

‘So spake the King; I knew not all
he meant.’

PELLEAS AND ETTARRE

KING ARTHUR made new knights to
fill the gap
Left by the Holy Quest; and as he
sat
In hall at old Caerleon, the high doors
Were softly sunder'd, and thro' these
a youth,
Pelleas, and the sweet smell of the
fields
Past, and the sunshine came along
with him.

‘Make me thy knight, because I
know, Sir King,
All that belongs to knighthood, and
I love.’
Such was his cry; for having heard
the King
Had let proclaim a tournament—the
prize¹⁰
A golden circlet and a knightly sword,
Full fain had Pelleas for his lady won
The golden circlet, for himself the
sword.
And there were those who knew him
near the King,
And promised for him; and Arthur
made him knight.

And this new knight, Sir Pelleas of
the Isles—
But lately come to his inheritance,
And lord of many a barren isle was
he—
Riding at noon, a day or twain before
Across the forest call'd of Dean, to
find²⁰
Caerleon and the King, had felt the
sun
Beat like a strong knight on his helm
and reel'd
Almost to falling from his horse, but
saw
Near him a mound of even-sloping
side
Whereon a hundred stately beeches
grew,

And here and there great hollies under
 them;
 But for a mile all round was open
 space
 And fern and heath. And slowly Pel-
 leas drew
 To that dim day, then, binding his
 good horse
 To a tree, cast himself down; and as
 he lay
 At random looking over the brown³⁰
 earth
 Thro' that green-glooming twilight of
 the grove,
 It seem'd to Pelleas that the fern
 without
 Burnt as a living fire of emeralds,
 So that his eyes were dazzled looking
 at it.
 Then o'er it crost the dimness of a
 cloud
 Floating, and once the shadow of a bird
 Flying, and then a fawn; and his eyes
 closed.
 And since he loved' all maidens, but
 no maid
 In special, half-awake he whisper'd:
 'Where?'⁴⁰
 O, where? I love thee, tho' I know
 thee not.
 For fair thou art and pure as Guine-
 vere,
 And I will make thee with my spear
 and sword
 As famous—O my Queen, my Guine-
 vere,
 For I will be thine Arthur when we
 meet.'

Suddenly waken'd with a sound of
 talk
 And laughter at the limit of the wood,
 And glancing thro' the hoary boles,
 he saw,
 Strange as to some old prophet might
 have seem'd
 A vision hovering on a sea of fire,⁵⁰
 Damsels in divers colors like the cloud
 Of sunset and sunrise, and all of them
 On horses, and the horses richly trapt
 Breast-high in that bright line of
 bracken stood;
 And all the damsels talk'd confusedly,
 And one was pointing this way and
 one that,
 Because the way was lost.

And Pelleas rose,
 And loosed his horse, and led him to
 the light.
 There she that seem'd the chief among
 them said:
 'In happy time behold our pilot-star!
 Youth, we are damsels-errant, and we
 ride,⁶¹
 Arm'd as ye see, to tilt against the
 knights
 There at Cacerleon, but have lost our
 way.
 To right? to left? straight forward?
 back again?
 Which? tell us quickly.'

Pelleas gazing thought,
 'Is Guinevere herself so beautiful?'
 For large her violet eyes look'd, and
 her bloom
 A rosy dawn kindled in stainless hea-
 vens,
 And round her limbs, mature in wo-
 manhood;
 And slender was her hand and smal
 her shape;⁷⁰
 And but for those large eyes, the
 haunts of scorn,
 She might have seem'd a toy to trifle
 with,
 And pass and care no more. But
 while he gazed
 The beauty of her flesh abash'd the
 boy,
 As tho' it were the beauty of her
 soul;
 For as the base man, judging of the
 good,
 Puts his own baseness in him by de-
 fault
 Of will and nature, so did Pelleas lend
 All the young beauty of his own soul
 to hers,
 Believing her, and when she spake to
 him⁸⁰
 Stammer'd, and could not make her a
 reply.
 For out of the waste islands had he
 come,
 Where saving his own sisters he had
 known
 Scarce any but the women of his isles,
 Rough wives, that laugh'd and
 scream'd against the gulls,
 Makers of nets, and living from the
 sea.

Then with a slow smile turn'd the
 lady round
 And look'd upon her people; and, as
 when
 A stone is flung into some sleeping
 tarn
 The circle widens till it lip the marge,
 Spread the slow smile thro' all her
 company.
 Three knights were thereamong, and
 they too smiled,
 Scorning him; for the lady was Et-
 tarre,
 And she was a great lady in her land.

Again she said: 'O wild and of the
 woods,
 Knowest thou not the fashion of our
 speech?
 Or have the Heavens but given thee
 a fair face,
 Lacking a tongue?'

'O damsel,' answer'd he,
 'I woke from dreams, and coming
 out of gloom
 Was dazzled by the sudden light, and
 crave
 Pardon: but will ye to Caerleon? I
 Go likewise; shall I lead you to the
 King?'

'Lead then,' she said; and thro'
 the woods they went.
 And while they rode, the meaning in
 his eyes,
 His tenderness of manner, and chaste
 awe,
 His broken utterances and bashful-
 ness,
 Were all a burthen to her, and in her
 heart
 She mutter'd, 'I have lighted on a
 fool,
 Raw, yet so stale!' But since her
 mind was bent
 On hearing, after trumpet blown, her
 name
 And title, 'Queen of Beauty,' in the
 lists
 Cried — and beholding him so strong
 she thought
 That peradventure he will fight for
 me,
 And win the circlet — therefore flat-
 ter'd him,

Being so gracious that he wellnigh
 deem'd
 His wish by hers was echo'd; and her
 knights
 And all her damsels too were gracious
 to him,
 For she was a great lady.

And when they reach'd
 Caerleon, ere they past to lodging,
 she,
 Taking his hand, 'O the strong hand,'
 she said,
 'See! look at mine! but wilt thou
 fight for me,
 And win me this fine circlet, Pelleas,
 That I may love thee?'

Then his helpless heart
 Leapt, and he cried, 'Ay! wilt thou
 if I win?
 'Ay, that will I,' she answer'd, and
 she laugh'd,
 And straightly nipt the hand, and flung
 it from her;
 Then glanced askew at those three
 knights of hers.
 Till all her ladies laugh'd along with
 her.

'O happy world,' thought Pelleas,
 'all, meseems,
 Are happy; I the happiest of them
 all!'
 Nor slept that night for pleasure in his
 blood,
 And green wood-ways, and eyes among
 the leaves;
 Then being on the morrow knighted,
 sware
 To love one only. And as he came
 away,
 The men who met him rounded on
 their heels
 And wonder'd after him, because his
 face
 Shone like the countenance of a priest
 of old
 Against the flame about a sacrifice
 Kindled by fire from heaven; so glad
 was he.

Then Arthur made vast banquets,
 and strange knights
 From the four winds came in; and
 each one sat.

Tho' served with choice from air, land,
stream, and sea,
Oft in mid-banquet measuring with
his eyes
His neighbor's make and might; and
Pelleas look'd
Noble among the noble, for he
dream'd
His lady loved him, and he knew him-
self
Loved of the King; and him his new-
made knight
Worshipt, whose lightest whisper
moved him more
Than all the ranged reasons of the
world.

Then blush'd and brake the morn-
ing of the jousts, ¹⁵⁰
And this was call'd 'The Tournament
of Youth';
For Arthur, loving his young knight,
withheld
His older and his mightier from the
lists,
That Pelleas might obtain his lady's
love,
According to her promise, and re-
main
Lord of the tourney. And Arthur had
the jousts
Down in the flat field by the shore of
Usk
Holden; the gilded parapets were
crown'd
With faces, and the great tower fill'd
with eyes
Up to the summit, and the trumpets
blew. ¹⁶⁰
There all day long Sir Pelleas kept the
field
With honor; so by that strong hand
of his
The sword and golden circlet were
achieved.

Then rang the shout his lady loved;
the heat
Of pride and glory fired her face, her
eye
Sparkled; she caught the circlet from
his lance,
And there before the people crown'd
herself.
So for the last time she was gracious
to him.

Then at Caerleon for a space—her
look
Bright for all others, cloudier on her
knight—
Linger'd Ettarre; and, seeing Pelleas
droop ¹⁷⁰
Said Guinevere, 'We marvel at thee
much,
O damsel, wearing this unsunny
face
To him who won thee glory!' And
she said,
'Had ye not held your Lancelot in
your bower,
My Queen, he had not won.' Whereat
the Queen,
As one whose foot is bitten by an
ant,
Glanced down upon her, turn'd and
went her way.

But after, when her damsels, and
herself,
And those three knights all set their
faces home, ¹⁸⁰
Sir Pelleas follow'd. She that saw
him cried:
'Damsels—and yet I should be shamed
to say it—
I cannot bide Sir Baby. Keep him
back
Among yourselves. Would rather
that we had
Some rough old knight who knew the
worldly way,
Albeit grizzlier than a bear, to ride
And jest with! Take him to you,
keep him off,
And pamper him with papmeat, if ye
will,
Old milky fables of the wolf and
sheep,
Such as the wholesome mothers tell
their boys. ¹⁹⁰
Nay, should ye try him with a merry
one
To find his mettle, good; and if he
fly us,
Small matter! let him.' This her
damsels heard,
And, mindful of her small and cruel
hand,
They, closing round him thro' the
journey home,
Acted her hest, and always from her
side

Restrain'd him with all manner of
 device,
 So that he could not come to speech
 with her.
 And when she gain'd her castle, up-
 sprang the bridge,
 Down rang the grate of iron thro' the
 groove,
 And he was left alone in open
 field.

'These be the ways of ladies,' Pel-
 leas thought,
 'To those who love them, trials of our
 faith.
 Yea, let her prove me to the utter-
 most,
 For loyal to the uttermost am I.'
 So made his moan, and, darkness fall-
 ing, sought
 A priory not far off, there lodged, but
 rose
 With morning every day, and, moist
 or dry,
 Full-arm'd upon his charger all day
 long
 Sat by the walls, and no one open'd to
 him.

And this persistence turn'd her scorn
 to wrath.
 Then, calling her three knights, she
 charged them, 'Out!
 And drive him from the walls.' And
 out they came,
 But Pelleas overthrew them as they
 dash'd
 Against him one by one; and these
 return'd,
 But still he kept his watch beneath
 the wall.

Thereon her wrath became a hate;
 and once,
 A week beyond, while walking on
 the walls
 With her three knights, she pointed
 downward, 'Look,
 He haunts me—I cannot breathe—
 besieges me!
 Down! strike him! put my hate into
 your strokes,
 And drive him from my walls.' And
 down they went,
 And Pelleas overthrew them one by
 one;

And from the tower above him cried
 Ettarre,
 'Bind him, and bring him in.'
 He heard her voice;
 Then let the strong hand, which had
 overthrown
 Her minion-knights, by those he over-
 threw
 Be bounden straight, and so they
 brought him in.

Then when he came before Ettarre,
 the sight
 Of her rich beauty made him at one
 glance
 More bondsman in his heart than in
 his bonds.
 Yet with good cheer he spake: 'Be-
 hold me, lady,
 A prisoner, and the vassal of thy will;
 And if thou keep me in thy donjon
 here,
 Content am I so that I see thy face
 But once a day; for I have sworn my
 vows,
 And thou hast given thy promise, and
 I know
 That all these pains are trials of my
 faith,
 And that thyself, when thou hast seen
 me strain'd
 And sifted to the utmost, wilt at length
 Yield me thy love and know me for
 thy knight.'

Then she began to rail so bitterly,
 With all her damsels, he was stricken
 mute,
 But, when she mock'd his vows and
 the great King.
 Lighted on words: 'For pity of thine
 own self,
 Peace, lady, peace; is he not thine and
 mine?'
 'Thou fool,' she said, 'I never heard
 his voice
 But long'd to break away. Unbind him
 now,
 And thrust him out of doors; for save
 he be
 Fool to the midmost marrow of his
 bones,
 He will return no more.' And those,
 her three,
 Laugh'd, and unbound, and thrust
 him from the gate.

And after this, a week beyond, again
 She call'd them, saying: 'There he
 watches yet,
 There like a dog before his master's
 door!
 Kick'd, he returns; do ye not hate
 him, ye?
 Ye know yourselves; how can ye bide
 at peace,
 Affronted with his fulsome innocence?
 Are ye but creatures of the board and
 bed,
 No men to strike? Fall on him all at
 once,
 And if ye slay him I reckon not; if ye
 fail,
 Give ye the slave mine order to be
 bound,
 Bind him as heretofore, and bring him
 in.
 It may be ye shall slay him in his
 bonds.'

She spake, and at her will they
 couch'd their spears,
 Three against one; and Gawain pass-
 ing by,
 Bound upon solitary adventure, saw
 Low down beneath the shadow of
 those towers
 A villainy, three to one; and thro' his
 heart
 The fire of honor and all noble deeds
 Flash'd, and he call'd, 'I strike upon
 thy side —
 The caitiffs!' 'Nay,' said Pelleas,
 'but forbear;
 He needs no aid who doth his lady's
 will.'

So Gawain, looking at the villainy
 done,
 Forbore, but in his heat and eagerness
 Trembled and quiver'd, as the dog,
 withheld
 A moment from the vermin that he
 sees
 Before him, shivers ere he springs and
 kills.

And Pelleas overthrew them, one to
 three;
 And they rose up, and bound, and
 brought him in.
 Then first her anger, leaving Pelleas,
 burn'd

Full on her knights in many an evil
 name
 Of craven, weakling, and thrice-beaten
 hound:
 'Yet, take him, ye that scarce are fit
 to touch,
 Far less to bind, your victor, and
 thrust him out,
 And let who will release him from his
 bonds.
 And if he comes again' — there she
 brake short;
 And Pelleas answer'd: 'Lady, for in-
 deed
 I loved you and I deem'd you beau-
 tiful,
 I cannot brook to see your beauty
 marr'd
 Thro' evil spite; and if ye love me
 not,
 I cannot bear to dream you so for-
 sworn.
 I had liefer ye were worthy of my
 love
 Than to be loved again of you — far-
 well.
 And tho' ye kill my hope, not yet my
 love,
 Vex not yourself; ye will not see me
 more.'

While thus he spake, she gazed
 upon the man
 Of princely bearing, tho' in bonds, and
 thought:
 'Why have I push'd him from me?
 this man loves,
 If love there be; yet him I loved not.
 Why?
 I deem'd him fool? yea, so? or that
 in him
 A something — was it nobler than my-
 self? —
 Seem'd my reproach? He is not of
 my kind.
 He could not love me, did he know
 me well.
 Nay, let him go — and quickly.' And
 her knights
 Laugh'd not, but thrust him bounden
 out of door.

Forth sprang Gawain, and loosed
 him from his bonds,
 And flung them o'er the walls; and
 afterward,

Shaking his hands, as from a lazar's
rag,
'Faith of my body,' he said, 'and art
thou not—³¹⁰
Yea thou art he, whom late our Ar-
thur made
Knight of his table; yea, and he that
won
The circlet? wherefore hast thou so
defamed
Thy brotherhood in me and all the rest
As let these caitiffs on thee work their
will?'

And Pelleas answer'd: 'O, their
wills are hers
For whom I won the circlet; and
mine, hers,
Thus to be bounden, so to see her face,
Marr'd tho' it be with spite and mock-
ery now,
Other than when I found her in the
woods;³²⁰
And tho' she hath me bounden but in
spite,
And all to flout me, when they bring
me in,
Let me be bounden, I shall see her
face;
Else must I die thro' mine unhappi-
ness.'

And Gawain answer'd kindly tho'
in scorn:
'Why, let my lady bind me if she will,
And let my lady beat me if she will;
But an she send her delegate to thrall
These fighting hands of mine— Christ
kill me then
But I will slice him handless by the
wrist,³³⁰
And let my lady sear the stump for
him,
Howl as he may! But hold me for
your friend.
Come, ye know nothing; here I pledge
my troth,
Yea, by the honor of the Table Round,
I will be leal to thee and work thy
work,
And tame thy jailing princess to thine
hand.
Lend me thine horse and arms, and I
will say
That I have slain thee. She will let
me in

To hear the manner of thy fight and
fall;
Then, when I come within her coun-
sels, then³⁴⁰
From prime to vespers will I chant
thy praise
As prouest knight and truest lover,
more
Than any have sung thee living, till
she long
To have thee back in lusty life
again,
Not to be bound, save by white bonds
and warm,
Dearer than freedom. Wherefore now
thy horse
And armor; let me go; be comforted.
Give me threedays to melt her fancy,
and hope
The third night hence will bring thee
news of gold.'

Then Pelleas lent his horse and all
his arms,³⁵⁰
Saving the goodly sword, his prize,
and took
Gawain's, and said, 'Betray me not,
but help—
Art thou not he whom men call light-
of-love?'

'Ay,' said Gawain, 'for women be
so light;
Then bounded forward to the castle
walls,
And raised a bugle hanging from his
neck,
And winded it, and that so musically
That all the old echoes hidden in the
wall
Rang out like hollow woods at hunt-
ing-tide.

Up ran a score of damsels to the
tower;³⁶⁰
'Avaunt,' they cried, 'our lady loves
thee not!'
But Gawain lifting up his visor
said:
'Gawain am I, Gawain of Arthur's
court,
And I have slain this Pelleas whom
ye hate.
Behold his horse and armor. Open
gates,
And I will make you merry.'

And down they ran,
Her damsels, crying to their lady,
'Lo!

Pelleas is dead — he told us — he that
hath

His horse and armor; will ye let him
in?

He slew him! Gawain, Gawain of
the court, 370

Sir Gawain — there he waits below
the wall,

Blowing his bugle as who should say
him nay.'

And so, leave given, straight on
thro' open door

Rode Gawain, whom she greeted
courteously.

'Dead, is it so?' she ask'd. 'Ay, ay,'
said he,

'And oft in dying cried upon your
name.'

'Pity on him,' she answer'd, 'a good
knight,

But never let me bide one hour at
peace.'

'Ay,' thought Gawain, 'and you be
fair enow;

But I to your dead man have given
my troth, 380

That whom ye loathe, him will I
make you love.'

So those three days, aimless about
the land,

Lost in a doubt, Pelleas wandering
Waited, until the third night brought
a moon

With promise of large light on woods
and ways.

Hot was the night and silent; but a
sound

Of Gawain ever coming, and this lay —
Which Pelleas had heard sung before
the Queen,

And seen her sadden listening — vext
his heart,

And marr'd his rest — 'A worm within
the rose.' 390

'A rose, but one, none other rose had I,
A rose, one rose, and this was wondrous
fair,

One rose, a rose that gladden'd earth and
sky,

One rose, my rose, that sweeten'd all mine
air —
I cared not for the thorns; the thorns were
there.

'One rose, a rose to gather by and by,
One rose, a rose, to gather and to wear,
No rose but one — what other rose had I?
One rose, my rose; a rose that will not die, —
He dies who loves it, — if the worm be
there.' 400

This tender rhyme, and evermore
the doubt,
'Why lingers Gawain with his golden
news?'

So shook him that he could not rest,
but rode

Ere midnight to her walls, and bound
his horse

Hard by the gates. Wide open were
the gates,

And no watch kept; and in thro' these
he past,

And heard but his own steps, and his
own heart

Beating, for nothing moved but his
own self

And his own shadow. Then he crost
the court,

And spied not any light in hall or
bower, 410

But saw the postern portal also wide
Yawning; and up a slope of garden,
all

Of roses white and red, and brambles
mixt

And overgrowing them, went on, and
found,

Here too, all hush'd below the mellow
moon,

Save that one rivulet from a tiny cave
Came lightening downward, and so
spilt itself

Among the roses and was lost again.

Then was he ware of three pavilions
rear'd

Above the bushes, gilden-peakt. In
one, 420

Red after revel, droned her lurdane
knights

Slumbering, and their three squires
across their feet;

In one, their malice on the placid lip
Frozen by sweet sleep, four of her
damsels lay;

And in the third, the circlet of the
 jousts
 Bound on her brow, were Gawain and
 Ettarre.

Back, as a hand that pushes thro'
 the leaf
 To find a nest and feels a snake, he
 drew;
 Back, as a coward slinks from what
 he fears
 To cope with, or a traitor proven, or
 hound
 Beaten, did Pelleas in an utter shame
 Creep with his shadow thro' the court
 again,
 Fingering at his sword-handle until
 he stood
 There on the castle-bridge once more,
 and thought,
 'I will go back, and slay them where
 they lie.'

And so went back, and seeing them
 yet in sleep
 Said, 'Ye, that so dishallow the holy
 sleep,
 Your sleep is death,' and drew the
 sword, and thought,
 'What! slay a sleeping knight? the
 King hath bound
 And sworn me to this brotherhood;'
 again,
 'Alas that ever a knight should be so
 false!'
 Then turn'd, and so return'd, and
 groaning laid
 The naked sword athwart their naked
 throats,
 There left it, and them sleeping; and
 she lay,
 The circlet of the tourney round her
 brows,
 And the sword of the tourney across
 her throat.

And forth he past, and mounting
 on his horse
 Stared at her towers that, larger than
 themselves
 In their own darkness, throng'd into
 the moon;
 Then crush'd the saddle with his
 thighs, and clench'd
 His hands, and madden'd with himself
 and moan'd:

'Would they have risen against me
 in their blood
 At the last day? I might have an
 swer'd them
 Even before high God. O towers so
 strong,
 Huge, solid, would that even while I
 gaze
 The crack of earthquake shivering to
 your base
 Split you, and hell burst up your har-
 lot roofs
 Bellowing, and charr'd you thro' and
 thro' within,
 Black as the harlot's heart—hollow
 as a skull!
 Let the fierce east scream thro' your
 eyelet-holes,
 And whirl the dust of harlots round
 and round
 In dung and nettles! hiss, snake—I
 saw him there—
 Let the fox bark, let the wolf yell!
 Who yells
 Here in the still sweet summer night
 but I—
 I, the poor Pellcas whom she call'd
 her fool?
 Fool, beast—he, she, or I? myself
 most fool;
 Beast too, as lacking human wit—
 disgraced,
 Dishonor'd all for trial of true love—
 Love?—we be all alike; only the King
 Hath made us fools and liars. O
 noble vows!
 O great and sane and simple race of
 brutes
 That own no lust because they have
 no law!
 For why should I have loved her to
 my shame?
 I loathe her, as I loved her to my
 shame.
 I never loved her, I but lusted for
 her—
 Away!'

He dash'd the rowel into his horse,
 And bounded forth and vanish'd thro'
 the night.

Then she, that felt the cold touch
 on her throat,
 Awaking knew the sword, and turn'd
 herself

To Gawain: 'Liar, for thou hast not
slain ⁴⁸⁰
This Pelleas! here he stood, and
might have slain
Me and thyself.' And he that tells
the tale
Says that her ever-veering fancy
turn'd
To Pelleas, as the one true knight on
earth
And only lover; and thro' her love
her life
Wasted and pined, desiring him in
vain.

But he by wild and way, for half
the night,
And over hard and soft, striking the
sod
From out the soft, the spark from off
the hard,
Rode till the star above the wakening
sun, ⁴⁹⁰
Beside that tower where Percivale
was cowl'd,
Glanced from the rosy forehead of the
dawn.
For so the words were flash'd into his
heart
He knew not whence or wherefore:
'O sweet star,
Pure on the virgin forehead of the
dawn!'
And there he would have wept, but
felt his eyes
Harder and drier than a fountain bed
In summer. Thither came the village
girls
And linger'd talking, and they came
no more
Till the sweet heavens have fill'd it
from the heights ⁵⁰⁰
Again with living waters in the
change
Of seasons. Hard his eyes, harder
his heart
Seem'd; but so weary were his limbs
that he,
Gasping, 'Of Arthur's hall am I, but
here,
Here let me rest and die,' cast himself
down,
And gulf'd his griefs in inmost sleep;
so lay,
Till shaken by a dream, that Gawain
fired

The hall of Merlin, and the morning
star
Reel'd in the smoke, brake into flame,
and fell.

He woke, and being ware of some
one nigh, ⁵¹⁰
Sent hands upon him, as to tear him,
crying,
'False! and I held thee pure as Guine
vere.'

But Percivale stood near him and
replied,
'Am I but false as Guinevere is
pure?
Or art thou mazed with dreams? or
being one
Of our free-spoken Table hast not
heard
That Lancelot' — there he check'd
himself and paused.

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as
with one
Who gets a wound in battle, and the
sword
That made it plunges thro' the wound
again, ⁵²⁰
And pricks it deeper; and he shrank
and wall'd,
'Is the Queen false?' and Percivale
was mute.
'Have any of our Round Table held
their vows?'
And Percivale made answer not a
word.
'Is the King true?' 'The King!'
said Percivale.
'Why, then let men couple at once
with wolves.
What! art thou mad?'

But Pelleas, leaping up,
Ran thro' the doors and vaulted on his
horse
And fled. Small pity upon his horse
had he,
Or on himself, or any, and when he
met ⁵³⁰
A cripple, one that held a hand for
alms —
Hunch'd as he was, and like an old
dwarf-elm
That turns its back on the salt blast,
the boy

Paused not, but overrode him, shout-
 ing, 'False,
 And false with Gawain!' and so left
 him bruised
 And batter'd, and fled on, and hill and
 wood
 Went ever streaming by him till the
 gloom
 That follows on the turning of the
 world
 Darken'd the common path. He
 twitch'd the reins,
 And made his beast, that better knew
 it, swerve ⁵⁴⁰
 Now off it and now on; but when he
 saw
 High up in heaven the hall that Mer-
 lin built,
 Blackening against the dead-green
 stripes of even,
 'Black nest of rats,' he groan'd, 'ye
 build too high.'

Not long thereafter from the city
 gates
 Issued Sir Lancelot riding airily,
 Warm with a gracious parting from
 the Queen,
 Peace at his heart, and gazing at a
 star
 And marvelling what it was; on whom
 the boy,
 Across the silent seeded meadow-
 grass ⁵⁵⁰
 Borne, clash'd; and Lancelot, saying,
 'What name hast thou
 That ridest here so blindly and so
 hard?'
 'No name, no name,' he shouted, 'a
 scourge am I
 To lash the treasures of the Table
 Round.'
 'Yea, but thy name?' 'I have many
 names,' he cried:
 'I am wrath and shame and hate and
 evil fame,
 And like a poisonous wind I pass to
 blast
 And blaze the crime of Lancelot and
 the Queen.'
 'First over me,' said Lancelot, 'shalt
 thou pass.'
 'Fight therefore,' yell'd the youth,
 and either knight ⁵⁶⁰
 Drew back a space, and when they
 closed, at once

The weary steed of Pelleas flounder-
 ing flung
 His rider, who call'd out from the
 dark field,
 'Thou art false as hell; slay me, I
 have no sword.'
 Then Lancelot, 'Yea, between thy
 lips — and sharp;
 But here will I disedge it by thy
 death.'
 'Slay then,' he shriek'd, 'my will is
 to be slain,'
 And Lancelot, with his heel upon the
 fallen,
 Rolling his eyes, a moment stood, then
 spake:
 'Rise, weakling; I am Lancelot; say
 thy say.' ⁵⁷⁰

And Lancelot slowly rode his war-
 horse back
 To Camelot, and Sir Pelleas in brief
 while
 Caught his unbroken limbs from the
 dark field,
 And follow'd to the city. It chanced
 that both
 Brake into hall together, worn and
 pale.
 There with her knights and dames was
 Guinevere.
 Full wonderingly she gazed on Lance-
 lot
 So soon return'd, and then on Pelleas,
 him
 Who had not greeted her, but cast
 himself
 Down on a bench, hard-breathing.
 'Have ye fought?' ⁵⁸⁰
 She ask'd of Lancelot. 'Ay, my
 Queen,' he said.
 'And thou hast overthrown him?'
 'Ay, my Queen.'
 Then she, turning to Pelleas, 'O young
 knight,
 Hath the great heart of knighthood in
 thee fail'd
 So far thou canst not bide, unfro-
 wardly,
 A fall from *him*? Then, for he an-
 swer'd not,
 'Or hast thou other griefs? If I, the
 Queen,
 May help them, loose thy tongue, and
 let me know.'
 But Pelleas lifted up an eye so fierce

She quail'd ; and he, hissing 'I have
no sword,'⁵⁹⁰
Sprang from the door into the dark.
The Queen
Look'd hard upon her lover, he on
her,
And each foresaw the dolorous day to
be ;
And all talk died, as in a grove all
song
Beneath the shadow of some bird of
prey.
Then a long silence came upon the
hall,
And Modred thought, 'The time is
hard at hand.'

THE LAST TOURNAMENT

DAGONET, the fool, whom Gawain in
his mood
Had made mock-knight of Arthur's
Table Round,
At Camelot, high above the yellowing
woods,
Danced like a wither'd leaf before the
hall.
And toward him from the hall, with
harp in hand,
And from the crown thereof a car-
net
Of ruby swaying to and fro, the
prize
Of Tristram in the jousts of yesterday,
Came Tristram, saying, 'Why skip ye
so, Sir Fool?'

For Arthur and Sir Lancelot riding
once¹⁰
Far down beneath a winding wall of
rock
Heard a child wall. A stump of oak
half-dead,
From roots like some black coil of
carven snakes,
Clutch'd at the crag, and started thro'
mid air
Bearing an eagle's nest ; and thro' the
tree
Rush'd ever a rainy wind, and thro'
the wind
Pierced ever a child's cry ; and crag
and tree
Scaling, Sir Lancelot from the peril-
ous nest,

This ruby necklace thrice around her
neck,
And all unscarr'd from beak or talon,
brought²⁰
A maiden babe, which Arthur pitying
took,
Then gave it to his Queen to rear.
The Queen,
But coldly acquiescing, in her white
arms
Received, and after loved it tenderly,
And named it Nestling ; so forgot her
self
A moment, and her cares ; till that
young life
Being smitten in mid heaven with
mortal cold
Past from her, and in time the car-
canet
Vext her with plaintive memories of
the child.
So she, delivering it to Arthur, said,³⁰
'Take thou the jewels of this dead
innocence,
And make them, an thou wilt, a
tourney-prize.'

To whom the King: 'Peace to
thine eagle-borne
Dead nestling, and this honor after
death,
Following thy will ! but, O my Queen,
I muse
Why ye not wear on arm, or neck, or
zone
Those diamonds that I rescued from
the tarn,
And Lancelot won, methought, for
thee to wear.'

'Would rather you had let them
fall,' she cried,
'Plunge and be lost — ill-fated as they
were,⁴⁰
A bitterness to me ! — ye look amazed,
Not knowing they were lost as soon as
given —
Slid from my hands when I was lean-
ing out
Above the river — that unhappy child
Past in her barge ; but rosier luck will
go
With these rich jewels, seeing that
they came
Not from the skeleton of a brother-
slayer,

But the sweet body of a maiden babe.
Perchance — who knows? — the purest
of thy knights
May win them for the purest of my
maids.' 50

She ended, and the cry of a great
jousts
With trumpet-blowings ran on all the
ways
From Camelot in among the faded
fields
To furthest towers; and everywhere
the knights
Arm'd for a day of glory before the
King.

But on the hither side of that loud
morn
Into the hall stagger'd, his visage
ribb'd
From ear to ear with dogwhip-weals,
his nose
Bridge-broken, one eye out, and one
hand off,
And one with shatter'd fingers dan-
gling lame, 60
A churl, to whom indignantly the
King:

'My churl, for whom Christ died,
what evil beast
Hath drawn his claws athwart thy
face? or flend?
Man was it who marr'd heaven's image
in thee thus?'

Then, sputtering thro' the hedge of
splinter'd teeth,
Yet strangers to the tongue, and with
blunt stump
Pitch-blacken'd sawing the air, said
the maim'd churl:

'He took them and he drave them
to his tower —
Some hold he was a table-knight of
thine —
A hundred goodly ones — the Red
Knight, he — 70
Lord, I was tending swine, and the
Red Knight
Brake in upon me and drave them to
his tower;
And when I call'd upon thy name as
one

That doest right by gentle and by
churl,
Maim'd me and maul'd, and would out-
right have slain,
Save that he sware me to a message,
saying:
"Tell thou the King and all his liars
that I
Have founded my Round Table in the
North,
And whatsoever his own knights have
sworn
My knights have sworn the counter to
it — and say 80
My tower is full of harlots, like his
court,
But mine are worthier, seeing they
profess
To be none other than themselves —
and say
My knights are all adulterers like his
own,
But mine are truer, seeing they pro-
fess
To be none other: and say his hour is
come,
The heathen are upon him, his long
lance
Broken, and his Excalibur a straw."'

Then Arthur turn'd to Kay the sen-
eschal:
'Take thou my churl, and tend him
curiously 90
Like a king's heir, till all his hurts be
whole.
The heathen — but that ever-climbing
wave,
Hurl'd back again so often in empty
foam,
Hath lain for years at rest — and rene-
gades,
Thieves, bandits, leavings of confu-
sion, whom
The wholesome realm is purged of
otherwise,
Friends, thro' your manhood and your
fealty, — now
Make their last head like Satan in the
North.
My younger knights, new-made, in
whom your flower
Waits to be solid fruit of golden
deeds, 100
Move with me toward their quelling,
which achieved,

The loneliest ways are safe from shore
to shore.
But thou, Sir Lancelot, sitting in my
place
Enchair'd to-morrow, arbitrate the
field;
For wherefore shouldst thou care to
mingle with it,
Only to yield my Queen her own
again?
Speak, Lancelot, thou art silent; is it
well?'

Thereto Sir Lancelot answer'd: 'It
is well;
Yet better if the King abide, and
leave
The leading of his younger knights to
me.
Else, for the King has will'd it, it is
well.'

Then Arthur rose and Lancelot fol-
low'd him,
And while they stood without the
doors, the King
Turn'd to him, saying: 'Is it then so
well?
Or mine the blame that oft I seem as
he
Of whom was written, "A sound is in
his ears"?
The foot that loiters, bidden go, — the
glance
That only seems half-loyal to com-
mand, —
A manner somewhat fallen from rever-
ence —
Or have I dream'd the bearing of our
knights
Tells of a manhood ever less and
lower?
Or whence the fear lest this my realm,
uprear'd,
By noble deeds at one with noble
vows,
From flat confusion and brute vio-
lences,
Reel back into the beast, and be no
more?'

He spoke, and taking all his younger
knights,
Down the slope city rode, and sharply
turn'd

North by the gate. In her high bower
the Queen,
Working a tapestry, lifted up her
head,
Watch'd her lord pass, and knew not
that she sigh'd.
Then ran across her memory the
strange rhyme
Of bygone Merlin, 'Where is he who
knows?
From the great deep to the great deep
he goes.'

But when the morning of a tourna-
ment,
By these in earnest those in mockery
call'd
The Tournament of the Dead Inno-
cence,
Brake with a wet wind blowing, Lan-
celot,
Round whose sick head all night, like
birds of prey,
The words of Arthur flying shriek'd,
arose,
And down a streetway hung with folds
of pure
White samite, and by fountains run-
ning wine,
Where children sat in white with cups
of gold,
Moved to the lists, and there, with
slow sad steps
Ascending, fill'd his double-dragon'd
chair.

He glanced and saw the stately gal-
leries,
Dame, damsel, each thro' worship of
their Queen
White-robed in honor of the stainless
child,
And some with scatter'd jewels, like a
bank
Of maiden snow mingled with sparks
of fire.
He look'd but once, and vail'd his eyes
again.

The sudden trumpet sounded as in a
dream
To ears but half-awaked, then one low
roll
Of autumn thunder, and the jousts
began;

And ever the wind blew, and yellow-
 ing leaf,
 And gloom and gleam, and shower and
 shorn plume
 Went down it. Sighing wearily, as
 one
 Who sits and gazes on a faded fire,
 When all the goodlier guests are past
 away,
 Sat their great umpire looking o'er the
 lists.
 He saw the laws that ruled the tourna-
 ment ¹⁶⁰
 Broken, but spake not; once, a knight
 cast down
 Before his throne of arbitration cursed
 The dead babe and the follies of the
 King;
 And once the laces of a helmet crack'd,
 And show'd him, like a vermin in its
 hole,
 Modred, a narrow face. Anon he
 heard
 The voice that billow'd round the bar-
 riers roar
 An ocean-sounding welcome to one
 knight,
 But newly-enter'd, taller than the rest,
 And armor'd all in forest green,
 whereon ¹⁷⁰
 There tript a hundred tiny silver deer,
 And wearing but a holly-spray for
 crest,
 With ever-scattering berries, and on
 shield
 A spear, a harp, a bugle—Tristram
 —late
 From over-seas in Brittany return'd,
 And marriage with a princess of that
 realm,
 Isolt the White—Sir Tristram of the
 Woods—
 Whom Lancelot knew, had held some-
 time with pain
 His own against him, and now yearn'd
 to shake
 The burthen off his heart in one full
 shock ¹⁸⁰
 With Tristram even to death. His
 strong hands gript
 And dinted the gilt dragons right and
 left,
 Until he groan'd for wrath—so many
 of those
 That ware their ladies' colors on the
 casque

Drew from before Sir Tristram to the
 bounds,
 And there with gibes and flickering
 mockeries
 Stood, while he mutter'd, 'Craven
 crests! O shame!
 What faith have these in whom they
 swear to love?
 The glory of our Round Table is no
 more.'

So Tristram won, and Lancelot
 gave, the gems, ¹⁹⁰
 Not speaking other word than, 'Hast
 thou won?
 Art thou the purest, brother? See,
 the hand
 Wherewith thou takest this is red!'
 to whom
 Tristram, half plagued by Lancelot's
 languorous mood,
 Made answer: 'Ay, but wherefore
 toss me this
 Like a dry bone cast to some hungry
 hound?
 Let be thy fair Queen's fantasy.
 Strength of heart
 And might of limb, but mainly use
 and skill,
 Are winners in this pastime of our
 King.
 My hand—belike the lance hath dript
 upon it— ²⁰⁰
 No blood of mine, I trow; but O chief
 knight,
 Right arm of Arthur in the battle-
 field,
 Great brother, thou nor I have made
 the world;
 Be happy in thy fair Queen as I in
 mine.'

And Tristram round the gallery
 made his horse
 Caracole; then bow'd his homage,
 bluntly saying,
 'Fair damsels, each to him who wor-
 ships each
 Sole Queen of Beauty and of love, be-
 hold
 This day my Queen of Beauty is not
 here.'
 And most of these were mute, some
 anger'd, one ²¹⁰
 Murmuring, 'All courtesy is dead.'
 and one.

'The glory of our Round Table is no more.'

Then fell thick rain, plume droopt
and mantle clung,
And pettish cries awoke, and the wan
day
Went glooming down in wet and
weariness;
But under her black brows a swarthy
one
Laugh'd shrilly, crying: 'Praise the
patient saints,
Our one white day of Innocence hath
past,
Tho' somewhat draggled at the skirt.
So be it.
The snowdrop only, flowering thro'
the year,²²⁰
Would make the world as blank as
wintertide.
Come—let us gladden their sad eyes,
our Queen's
And Lancelot's, at this night's solemn-
ity
With all the kindlier colors of the
field.'

So dame and damsel glitter'd at the
feast
Variously gay; for he that tells the
tale
Likened them, saying, as when an
hour of cold
Falls on the mountain in midsummer
snows,
And all the purple slopes of mountain
flowers
Pass under white, till the warm hour
returns²³⁰
With veer of wind and all are flowers
again,
So dame and damsel cast the simple
white,
And glowing in all colors, the live
grass,
Rose-campion, bluebell, kingcup,
poppy, glanced
About the revels, and with mirth so
loud
Beyond all use, that, half-amazed,
the Queen,
And wroth at Tristram and the law-
less jousts,
Brake up their sports, then slowly to
her bower

Parted, and in her bosom pain was
laid.

And little Dagonet on the morrow
morn,²⁴⁰
High over all the yellowing autumn-
tide,
Danced like a wither'd leaf before the
hall.
Then Tristram saying, 'Why skip ye
so, Sir Fool?'
Wheel'd round on either heel, Da-
gonet replied,
'Belike for lack of wiser company;
Or being fool, and seeing too much wit
Makes the world rotten, why, belike
I skip
To know myself the wisest knight of
all.'
'Ay, fool,' said Tristram, 'but 't is
eating dry
To dance without a catch, a roundelay
To dance to.' Then he twangled on
his harp,²⁵¹
And while he twangled little Dagonet
stood
Quiet as any water-sodden log
Stay'd in the wandering warble of a
brook,
But when the twangling ended, skipt
again;
And being ask'd, 'Why skipt ye not,
Sir Fool?'
Made answer, 'I had liefer twenty
years
Skip to the broken music of my brains
Than any broken music thou canst
make.'
Then Tristram, waiting for the quip
to come,²⁶⁰
'Good now, what music have I broken,
fool?'
And little Dagonet, skipping, 'Arthur,
the King's;
For when thou playest that air with
Queen Isolt,
Thou makest broken music with thy
bride,
Her daintier namesake down in Brit-
tany—
And so thou breakest Arthur's music
too.'
'Save for that broken music in thy
brains,
Sir Fool,' said Tristram, 'I would
break thy head.'

Fool, I came late, the heathen wars
 were o'er,
 The life had flown, we sware but by
 the shell — ²⁷⁰
 I am but a fool to crabb'd with a fool —
 Come, thou art crabb'd and sour; but
 lean me down,
 Sir Dagonet, one of thy long asses'
 ears,
 And harken if my music be not true.

"Free love — free field — we love but
 while we may.
 The woods are hush'd, their music is no
 more;
 The leaf is dead, the yearning past away.
 New leaf, new life — the days of frost are
 o'er;
 New life, new love, to suit the newer day;
 New loves are sweet as those that went be-
 fore. ²⁸⁰
 Free love — free field — we love but while
 we may."

'Ye might have moved slow-measure
 to my tune,
 Not stood stock-still. I made it in
 the woods,
 And heard it ring as true as tested
 gold.'

But Dagonet with one foot poised
 in his hand:
 'Friend, did ye mark that fountain
 yesterday,
 Made to run wine? — but this had
 run itself
 All out like a long life to a sour
 end —
 And them that round it sat with
 golden cups
 To hand the wine to whosoever came —
 The twelve small damosels white as
 Innocence, ²⁹¹
 In honor of poor Innocence the babe,
 Who left the gems which Innocence
 the Queen
 Lent to the King, and Innocence the
 King
 Gave for a prize — and one of those
 white slips
 Handed her cup and piped, the pretty
 one,
 "Drink, drink, Sir Fool," and there-
 upon I drank,
 Spat — pish — the cup was gold, the
 draught was mud.'

And Tristram: 'Was it muddier
 than thy gibes?
 Is all the laughter gone dead out of
 thee? — ³⁰⁰
 Not marking how the knighthood
 mock thee, fool —
 "Fear God: honor the King — his
 one true knight —
 Sole follower of the vows" — for here
 be they
 Who knew thee swine enow before I
 came,
 Smuttier than blasted grain. But
 when the King
 Had made thee fool, thy vanity so
 shot up
 It frightened all free fool from out thy
 heart;
 Which left thee less than fool, and
 less than swine,
 A naked aught — yet swine I hold
 thee still,
 For I have flung thee pearls and find
 thee swine.' ³¹⁰

And little Dagonet mincing with
 his feet:
 'Knight, an ye fling those rubies
 round my neck
 In lieu of hers, I'll hold thou hast
 some touch
 Of music, since I care not for thy
 pearls.
 Swine? I have wallow'd, I have
 wash'd — the world
 Is flesh and shadow — I have had my
 day.
 The dirty nurse, Experience, in her
 kind
 Hath foul'd me — an I wallow'd, then
 I wash'd —
 I have had my day and my philoso-
 phies —
 And thank the Lord I am King Ar-
 thur's fool. ³²⁰
 Swine, say ye? swine, goats, asses,
 rams, and geese
 Troop'd round a Paynim harper once,
 who thrumm'd
 On such a wire as musically as
 thou
 Some such fine song — but never a
 king's fool.'

And Tristram, 'Then were swine.
 goats, asses, geese

The wiser fools, seeing thy Paynim
bard
Had such a mastery of his mystery
That he could harp his wife up out of
hell.'

Then Dagonet, turning on the ball
of his foot,
'And whither harp'st thou thine?
down! and thyself³³⁰
Down! and two more; a helpful
harper thou,
That harpest downward! Dost thou
know the star
We call the Harp of Arthur up in
heaven?'

And Tristram, 'Ay, Sir Fool, for
when our King
Was victor wellnigh day by day, the
knight,
Glorying in each new glory, set his
name
High on all hills and in the signs of
heaven.'

And Dagonet answer'd: 'Ay, and
when the land
Was freed, and the Queen false, ye
set yourself
To babble about him, all to show your
wit—³⁴⁰
And whether he were king by cour-
tesy,
Or king by right—and so went harp-
ing down
The black king's highway, got so far
and grew
So witty that ye play'd at ducks and
drakes
With Arthur's vows on the great lake
of fire.
Tuwhoo! do ye see it? do ye see the
star?'

'Nay, fool,' said Tristram, 'not in
open day.'
And Dagonet: 'Nay, nor will; I see
it and hear.
It makes a silent music up in heaven,
And I and Arthur and the angels
hear,³⁵⁰
And then we skip.' 'Lo, fool,' he
said, 'ye talk
Fool's treason; is the King thy brother
fool?'

Then little Dagonet clapt his hands
and shrill'd:
'Ay, ay, my brother fool, the king of
fools!
Conceits himself as God that he can
make
Figs out of thistles, silk from bristles,
milk
From burning spurge, honey from
hornet-combs,
And men from beasts—Long live the
king of fools!'

And down the city Dagonet danced
away;
But thro' the slowly-mellowing ave-
nues³⁶⁰
And solitary passes of the wood
Rode Tristram toward Lyonesse and
the west.
Before him fled the face of Queen
Isolt
With ruby-circled neck, but evermore
Past, as a rustle or twitter in the
wood
Made dull his inner, keen his outer
eye
For all that walk'd, or crept, or
perch'd, or flew.
Anon the face, as, when a gust hath
blown,
Unruffling waters re-collect the shape
Of one that in them sees himself, re-
turn'd;³⁷⁰
But at the slot or fewmets of a deer,
Or even a fallen feather, vanish'd
again.

So on for all that day from lawn to
lawn
Thro' many a league-long bower he
rode. At length
A lodge of intertwined beechen-
boughs,
Furze-cramm'd and bracken-rooft, the
which himself
Built for a summer day with Queen
Isolt
Against a shower, dark in the golden
grove
Appearing, sent his fancy back to
where
She lived a moon in that low lodge
with him;³⁸⁰
Till Mark her lord had past, the Cor-
nish King,

With six or seven, when Tristram was
away,
And snatch'd her thence, yet, dread-
ing worse than shame
Her warrior Tristram, spake not any
word,
But bode his hour, devising wretched-
ness.

And now that desert lodge to Tris-
tram lookt
So sweet that, halting, in he past and
sank
Down on a drift of foliage random-
blown ;
But could not rest for musing how to
smooth
And sleek his marriage over to the
queen. 390
Perchance in lone Tintagil far from
all
The tonguesters of the court she had
not heard.
But then what folly had sent him over-
seas
After she left him lonely here ? a
name ?
Was it the name of one in Brittany,
Isolt, the daughter of the king ?
'Isolt
Of the White Hands' they call'd her :
the sweet name
Allured him first, and then the maid
herself,
Who served him well with those white
hands of hers,
And loved him well, until himself had
thought 400
He loved her also, wedded easily,
But left her all as easily, and return'd.
The black-blue Irish hair and Irish
eyes
Had drawn him home — what marvel ?
then he laid
His brows upon the drifted leaf and
dream'd.

He seem'd to pace the strand of
Brittany
Between Isolt of Britain and his bride,
And show'd them both the ruby-chain,
and both
Began to struggle for it, till his
queen
Graspt it so hard that all her hand was
red. 410

Then cried the Breton, 'Look, her
hand is red !
These be no rubies, this is frozen
blood,
And melts within her hand — her hand
is hot
With ill desires, but this I gave thee,
look,
Is all as cool and white as any flower.'
Follow'd a rush of eagle's wings, and
then
A whimpering of the spirit of the
child,
Because the twain had spoil'd her car-
canet.

He dream'd ; but Arthur with a
hundred spears
Rode far, till o'er the illimitable reed,
And many a glancing plash and sal-
lowy isle, 421
The wide-wing'd sunset of the misty
marsh
Glared on a huge machicolated tower
That stood with open doors, whereout
was roll'd
A roar of riot, as from men secure
Amid their marshes, ruffians at their
ease
Among their harlot-brides, an evil
song.
'Lo there,' said one of Arthur's youth,
for there,
High on a grim dead tree before the
tower,
A goodly brother of the Table Round
Swung by the neck ; and on the
boughs a shield 431
Showing a shower of blood in a field
noir,
And therebeside a horn, inflamed the
knights
At that dishonor done the gilded
spur,
Till each would clash the shield and
blow the horn.
But Arthur waved them back. Alone
he rode.
Then at the dry harsh roar of the
great horn,
That sent the face of all the marsh
aloft
An ever upward-rushing storm and
cloud
Of shriek and plume, the Red Knight
heard, and all, 440

Even to tipmost lance and topmost
helm,
In blood-red armor sallying, how'd to
the King :

'The teeth of Hell flay bare and
gnash thee flat ! —
Lo ! art thou not that eunuch-hearted
king
Who fain had clipt free manhood from
the world —
The woman-worshipper ? Yea, God's
curse, and I !
Slain was the brother of my paramour
By a knight of thine, and I that heard
her whine
And snivel, being eunuch-hearted too,
Sware by the scorpion-worm that
twists in hell 450
And stings itself to everlasting death,
To hang whatever knight of thine I
fought
And tumbled. Art thou king ? — Look
to thy life !'

He ended. Arthur knew the voice ;
the face
Wellnigh was helmet-hidden, and the
name
Went wandering somewhere darkling
in his mind.
And Arthur deign'd not use of word
or sword,
But let the drunkard, as he stretch'd
from horse
To strike him, overbalancing his bulk,
Down from the causeway heavily to
the swamp 460
Fall, as the crest of some slow-arching
wave,
Heard in dead night along that table-
shore,
Drops flat, and after the great waters
break
Whitening for half a league, and thin
themselves,
Far over sands marbled with moon
and cloud,
From less and less to nothing ; thus
he fell
Head-heavy. Then the knights, who
watch'd him, roar'd .
And shouted and leapt down upon
the fallen,
There trampled out his face from be-
ing known,

And sank his head in mire, and slided
themselves ; 470
Nor heard the King for their owr
cries, but sprang
Thro' open doors, and swording right
and left
Men, women, on their sodden faces,
hurl'd
The tables over and the wines, and
slew
Till all the rafters rang with woman-
yells,
And all the pavement stream'd with
massacre.
Then, echoing yell with yell, they
fired the tower,
Which half that autumn night, like
the live North,
Red-pulsing up thro' Alioth and Alcor,
Made all above it, and a hundred
meres 480
About it, as the water Moab saw
Come round by the east, and out be-
yond them flush'd
The long low dune and lazy-plunging
sea.

So all the ways were safe from shore
to shore,
But in the heart of Arthur pain was
lord.

Then, out of Tristram waking, the
red dream
Fled with a shout, and that low lodge
return'd,
Mid-forest, and the wind among the
boughs.
He whistled his good war-horse left to
graze
Among the forest greens, vaulted upon
him, 490
And rode beneath an ever-showering
leaf,
Till one lone woman, weeping near a
cross,
Stay'd him. 'Why weep ye ?' 'Lord,'
she said, 'my man
Hath left me or is dead ;' whereon he
thought —
'What, if she hate me now ? I would
not this.
What, if she love me still ? I would
not that.
I know not what I would' — but said
to her,

'Yet weep not thou, lest, if thy mate
return,
He find thy favor changed and love
thee not' —
Then pressing day by day thro' Lyon-
nesse⁵⁰⁰
Last in a roky hollow, belling, heard
The hounds of Mark, and felt the
goodly hounds
Yelp at his heart, but, turning, past
and gain'd
Tintagil, half in sea and high on land,
A crown of towers.

Down in a casement sat,
A low sea-sunset glorying round her
hair
And glossy-throated grace, Isolt the
queen.
And when she heard the feet of Tris-
tram grind
The spiring stone that scaled about
her tower,
Flush'd, started, met him at the doors,
and there⁵¹⁰
Belted his body with her white em-
brace,
Crying aloud: 'Not Mark — not Mark,
my soul!
The footstep flutter'd me at first — not
he!
Catlike thro' his own castle steals my
Mark,
But warrior-wise thou stridest thro'
his halls
Who hates thee, as I him — even to
the death.
My soul, I felt my hatred for my Mark
Quicken within me, and knew that
thou wert nigh.'
To whom Sir Tristram smiling, 'I am
here;
Let be thy Mark, seeing he is not thine.'

And drawing somewhat backward
she replied:⁵²¹
'Can he be wrong'd who is not even
his own,
But save for dread of thee had beaten
me,
Scratch'd, bitten, blinded, marr'd me
somehow — Mark?
What rights are his that dare not
strike for them?
Not lift a hand — not, tho' he found
me thus!

But harken! have ye met him? hence
he went
To-day for three days' hunting — as
he said —
And so returns belike within an hour.
Mark's way, my soul! — but eat not
thou with Mark,⁵³⁰
Because he hates thee even more than
fears,
Nor drink; and when thou passest any
wood
Close vizard, lest an arrow from the
bush
Should leave me all alone with Mark
and hell.
My God, the measure of my hate for
Mark
Is as the measure of my love for thee!'

So, pluck'd one way by hate and
one by love,
Drain'd of her force, again she sat,
and spake
To Tristram, as he knelt before her,
saying:
'O hunter, and O blower of the horn,
Harper, and thou hast been a rover
too,⁵⁴¹
For, ere I mated with my shambling
king,
Ye twain had fallen out about the
bride
Of one — his name is out of me — the
prize,
If prize she were — what marvel? —
she could see —
Thine, friend; and ever since my
craven seeks
To wreck thee villainously — but, O
Sir Knight,
What dame or damsel have ye kneel'd
to last?'

And Tristram, 'Last to my Queen
Paramount,
Here now to my queen paramount of
love⁵⁵⁰
And loveliness — ay, lovelier than
when first
Her light feet fell on our rough Lyon-
nesse,
Sailing from Ireland.'

Softly laugh'd Isolt:
'Flatter me not, for hath not our great
Queen

My dole of beauty trebled?' and he
 said:
 'Her beauty is her beauty, and thine
 thine,
 And thine is more to me — soft, gra-
 cious, kind —
 Save when thy Mark is kindled on thy
 lips
 Most gracious; but she, haughty, even
 to him,
 Lancelot; for I have seen him wan
 enow 560
 To make one doubt if ever the great
 Queen
 Have yielded him her love.'

To whom Isolt:
 'Ah, then, false hunter and false
 harper, thou
 Who brakest thro' the scruple of my
 bond,
 Calling me thy white hind, and saying
 to me
 That Guinevere had sinn'd against the
 highest,
 And I — misyoked with such a want
 of man —
 That I could hardly sin against the
 lowest.'

He answer'd: 'O my soul, be com-
 comforted!
 If this be sweet, to sin in leading-
 strings, 570
 If here be comfort, and if ours be
 sin,
 Crown'd warrant had we for the
 crowning sin
 That made us happy; but how ye
 greet me — fear
 And fault and doubt — no word of
 that fond tale —
 Thy deep heart-yearnings, thy sweet
 memories
 Of Tristram in that year he was away.'

And, saddening on the sudden,
 spake Isolt:
 'I had forgotten all in my strong joy
 To see thee — yearnings? — ay! for,
 hour by hour,
 Here in the never-ended afternoon, 580
 O, sweeter than all memories of thee,
 Deeper than any yearnings after thee
 Seem'd those far-rolling, westward-
 smiling seas,

Watch'd from this tower. Isolt of
 Britain dash'd
 Before Isolt of Brittany on the
 strand,
 Would that have chill'd her bride-kiss?
 Wedded her?
 Fought in her father's battles?
 wounded there?
 The King was all fulfill'd with grate-
 fulness,
 And she, my namesake of the hands,
 that heal'd
 Thy hurt and heart with unguent and
 caress — 590
 Well — can I wish her any huger
 wrong
 Than having known thee? her too
 hast thou left
 To pine and waste in those sweet
 memories.
 O, were I not my Mark's, by whom
 all men
 Are none, I should hate thee more
 than love.'

And Tristram, fondling her light
 hands, replied:
 'Grace, queen, for being loved; she
 loved me well.
 Did I love her? the name at least I
 loved.
 Isolt? — I fought his battles, for
 Isolt!
 The night was dark; the true star set.
 Isolt! 600
 The name was ruler of the dark —
 Isolt?
 Care not for her! patient, and prayer-
 ful, meek,
 Pale-blooded, she will yield herself to
 God.'

And Isolt answer'd: 'Yea, and why
 not I?
 Mine is the larger need, who am not
 meek,
 Pale-blooded, prayerful. Let me tell
 thee now.
 Here one black, mute midsummer
 night I sat,
 Lonely, but musing on thee, wonder-
 ing where,
 Murmuring a light song I had heard
 thee sing,
 And once or twice I spake thy name
 aloud. 610

Then flash'd a levin-brand ; and near
me stood,
In fuming sulphur blue and green, a
fiend —

Mark's way to steal behind one in the
dark —

For there was Mark : " He has wedded
her," he said,

Not said, but hiss'd it ; then this
crown of towers

So shook to such a roar of all the
sky,

That here in utter dark I swoon'd
away,

And woke again in utter dark, and
cried,

" I will flee hence and give myself to
God" —

And thou wert lying in thy new
leman's arms.' 620

Then Tristram, ever dallying with
her hand,

' May God be with thee, sweet, when
old and gray,

And past desire !' a saying that an-
ger'd her.

" May God be with thee, sweet, when
thou art old,

And sweet no more to me !" I need
Him now.

For when had Lancelot utter'd aught
so gross

Even to the swineherd's malkin in the
mast ?

The greater man the greater cour-
tesy.

Far other was the Tristram, Arthur's
knight !

But thou thro' ever harrying thy wild
beasts — 630

Save that to touch a harp, tilt with a
lance

Becomes thee well — art grown wild
beast thyself.

How dar'st thou, if lover, push me
even

In fancy from thy side, and set me
far

In the gray distance, half a life
away,

Her to be loved no more ? Unsay it,
unswear !

Flatter me rather, seeing me so weak,
Broken with Mark and hate and soli-
tude,

Thy marriage and mine own, that I
should suck

Lies like sweet wines. Lie to me ; I
believe. 640

Will ye not lie ? not swear, as there
ye kneel,

And solemnly as when ye sware to him,
The man of men, our King — My

God, the power

Was once in vows when men believed
the King !

They lied not then who sware, and
thro' their vows

The King prevailing made his realm
— I say,

Swear to me thou wilt love me even
when old,

Gray-hair'd, and past desire, and in
despair.'

Then Tristram, pacing moodily up
and down :

' Vows ! did you keep the vow you
made to Mark 650

More than I mine ? Lied, say ye ?
Nay, but learnt,

The vow that binds too strictly snaps
itself —

My knighthood taught me this — ay,
being snapt —

We run more counter to the soul
thereof

Than had we never sworn. I swear
no more.

I swore to the great King and am for-
sworn.

For once — even to the height — I
honor'd him.

" Man, is he man at all ?" methought,
when first

I rode from our rough Lyonesse, and
beheld

That victor of the Pagan throned in
hall — 660

His hair, a sun that ray'd from off a
brow

Like hill-snow high in heaven, the
steel-blue eyes,

The golden beard that clothed his lips
with light —

Moreover, that weird legend of his
birth,

With Merlin's mystic babble about his
end

Amazed me ; then, his foot was on a
stool

Shaped as a dragon; he seem'd to me
no man,
But Michael trampling Satan; so I
sware,
Being amazed. But this went by —
The vows!
O, ay — the wholesome madness of an
hour — 670
They served their use, their time; for
every knight
Believed himself a greater than him-
self,
And every follower eyed him as a
God;
Till he, being lifted up beyond him-
self,
Did mightier deeds than otherwise he
had done,
And so the realm was made. But then
their vows —
First mainly thro' that sullyng of our
Queen —
Began to gall the knighthood, asking
whence
Had Arthur right to bind them to
himself?
Dropt down from heaven? wash'd
up from out the deep? 680
They fail'd to trace him thro' the flesh
and blood
Of our old kings. Whence then? a
doubtful lord
To bind them by inviolable vows,
With flesh and blood perforce would
violate;
For feel this arm of mine — the tide
within
Red with free chase and heather-
scented air,
Pulsing full man. Can Arthur make
me pure
As any maiden child? lock up my
tongue
From uttering freely what I freely
hear?
Bind me to one? The wide world
laughs at it. 690
And worldling of the world am I, and
know
The ptarmigan that whitens ere his
hour
Woos his own end; we are not angels
here
Nor shall be. Vows — I am wood-
man of the woods,
And hear the garnet-headed yaffingale

Mock them — my soul, we love but
while we may;
And therefore is my love so large for
thee,
Seeing it is not bounded save by love.'

Here ending, he moved toward her,
and she said:
'Good; an I turn'd away my love for
thee 700
To some one thrice as courteous as
thyself —
For courtesy wins woman all as
well
As valor may, but he that closes
both
Is perfect, he is Lancelot — taller in-
deed,
Rosier and comelier, thou — but say I
loved
This knightliest of all knights, and
cast thee back
Thine own small saw, "We love but
while we may,"
Well then, what answer?'

He that while she spake,
Mindful of what he brought to adorn
her with,
The jewels, had let one finger lightly
touch 710
The warm white apple of her throat,
replied,
'Press this a little closer, sweet, un-
til —
Come, I am hunger'd and half-anger'd
— meat,
Wine, wine — and I will love thee to
the death,
And out beyond into the dream to
come.'

So then, when both were brought
to full accord,
She rose, and set before him all he
will'd;
And after these had comforted the
blood
With meats and wines, and satiated
their hearts —
Now talking of their woodland para-
dise, 720
The deer, the dewes, the fern, the
founts, the lawns;
Now mocking at the much ungainli-
ness,

And craven shifts, and long crane legs
of Mark —

Then Tristram laughing caught the
harp and sang:

‘Ay, ay, O, ay — the winds that bend
the brier!

A star in heaven, a star within the mere!

Ay, ay, O, ay — a star was my desire,

And one was far apart and one was near.

Ay, ay, O, ay — the winds that bow the
grass!

And one was water and one star was fire,
And one will ever shine and one will pass.

Ay, ay, O, ay — the winds that move the
mere!

Then in the light's last glimmer
Tristram show'd

And swung the ruby carcanet. She
cried,

‘The collar of some Order, which our
King

Hath newly founded, all for thee, my
soul,

For thee, to yield thee grace beyond
thy peers.’

‘Not so, my queen,’ he said, ‘but
the red fruit

Grown on a magic oak-tree in mid-
heaven,

And won by Tristram as a tourney-
prize,

And hither brought by Tristram for
his last

Love-offering and peace-offering unto
thee.’

He spoke, he turn'd, then, flinging
round her neck,

Ciaspt it, and cried, ‘Thine Order, O
my queen!’

But, while he bow'd to kiss the
jewell'd throat,

Out of the dark, just as the lips had
touch'd,

Behind him rose a shadow and a
shriek —

‘Mark's way,’ said Mark, and clove
him thro' the brain.

That night came Arthur home, and
while he climb'd,

All in a death-dumb autumn-dripping
gloom,

The stairway to the hall, and look'd
and saw

The great Queen's bower was dark, —
about his feet

A voice clung sobbing till he ques-
tion'd it,

‘What art thou?’ and the voice about
his feet

Sent up an answer, sobbing, ‘I am
thy fool,

And I shall never make thee smile
again.’

GUINEVERE

QUEEN GUINEVERE had fled the court,
and sat

There in the holy house at Almesbury
Weeping, none with her save a little
maid,

A novice. One low light betwixt them
burn'd

Blurr'd by the creeping mist, for all
abroad,

Beneath a moon unseen albeit at full,
The white mist, like a face-cloth to
the face,

Clung to the dead earth, and the land
was still.

For hither had she fled, her cause of
flight

Sir Modred; he that like a subtle
beast

Lay couchant with his eyes upon the
throne,

Ready to spring, waiting a chance.
For this

He chill'd the popular praises of the
King

With silent smiles of slow disparage-
ment;

And tamper'd with the Lords of the
White Horse,

Heathen, the brood by Hengist left:
and sought

To make disruption in the Table Round
Of Arthur, and to splinter it into feuds

Serving his traitorous end; and all his
aims

Were sharpen'd by strong hate for
Lancelot.

For thus it chanced one morn when
all the court,

Green-suited, but with plumes that
mock'd the may,

Had been — their wont — a-maying
 and return'd,
 That Modred still in green, all ear and
 eye,
 Climb'd to the high top of the garden-
 wall
 To spy some secret scandal if he might,
 And saw the Queen who sat betwixt
 her best
 Enid and lissome Vivien, of her court
 The wildest and the worst; and more
 than this
 He saw not, for Sir Lancelot passing
 by
 Spied where he couch'd, and as the ³⁰
 gardener's hand
 Picks from the colewort a green cater-
 pillar,
 So from the high wall and the flower-
 ing grove
 Of grasses Lancelot pluck'd him by
 the heel,
 And cast him as a worm upon the way;
 But when he knew the prince tho'
 marr'd with dust,
 He, reverencing king's blood in a bad
 man,
 Made such excuses as he might, and
 these
 Full knightly without scorn. For in
 those days
 No knight of Arthur's noblest dealt in
 scorn;
 But, if a man were halt, or hunch'd, ⁴⁰
 in him
 By those whom God had made full-
 limb'd and tall,
 Scorn was allow'd as part of his defect,
 And he was answer'd softly by the
 King
 And all his Table. So Sir Lancelot help
 To raise the prince, who rising twice
 or thrice
 Full sharply smote his knees, and
 smiled, and went;
 But, ever after, the small violence done
 Rankled in him and ruffled all his
 heart,
 As the sharp wind that ruffles all day
 long
 A little bitter pool about a stone ⁵⁰
 On the bare coast.

But when Sir Lancelot told
 This matter to the Queen, at first she
 laugh'd

Lightly, to think of Modred's dusty
 fall,
 Then shudder'd, as the village wife
 who cries,
 'I shudder, some one steps across my
 grave;'
 Then laugh'd again, but faintlier, for
 indeed
 She half-foresaw that he, the subtle
 beast,
 Would track her guilt until he found,
 and hers
 Would be for evermore a name of scorn.
 Henceforward rarely could she front
 in hall, ⁶¹
 Or elsewhere, Modred's narrow foxy
 face,
 Heart-hiding smile and gray persis-
 tent eye.
 Henceforward too, the Powers that
 tend the soul,
 To help it from the death that cannot
 die,
 And save it even in extremes, began
 To vex and plague her. Many a time
 for hours,
 Beside the placid breathings of the
 King,
 In the dead night, grim faces came
 and went
 Before her, or a vague spiritual fear —
 Like to some doubtful noise of creak-
 ing doors, ⁷¹
 Heard by the watcher in a haunted
 house,
 That keeps the rust of murder on the
 walls —
 Held her awake; or if she slept she
 dream'd
 An awful dream, for then she seem'd
 to stand
 On some vast plain before a setting sun,
 And from the sun there swiftly made
 at her
 A ghastly something, and its shadow
 flew
 Before it till it touch'd her, and she
 turn'd —
 When lo! her own, that broadening
 from her feet, ⁸⁰
 And blackening, swallow'd all the
 land, and in it
 Far cities burnt, and with a cry she
 woke.
 And all this trouble did not pass but
 grew,

Till even the clear face of the guile-
less King,
And trustful courtesies of household
life,
Became her bane ; and at the last she
said :
'O Lancelot, get thee hence to thine
own land,
For if thou tarry we shall meet again,
And if we meet again some evil chance
Will make the smouldering scandal
break and blaze

90

Before the people and our lord the
King.
And Lancelot ever promised, but re-
main'd.
And still they met and met. Again
she said,
'O Lancelot, if thou love me get thee
hence.'
And then they were agreed upon a
night—
When the good King should not be
there—to meet



'They rode to the divided way
There kiss'd, and parted weeping'

And part for ever. Vivien, lurking,
 heard.
 She told Sir Modred. Passion-pale
 they met
 And greeted. Hands in hands, and
 eye to eye,
 Low on the border of her couch they
 sat¹⁰⁰
 Stammering and staring. It was their
 last hour,
 A madness of farewells. And Modred
 brought
 His creatures to the basement of the
 tower
 For testimony; and crying with full
 voice,
 'Traitor, come out, ye are trapt at
 last,' aroused
 Lancelot, who rushing outward lion-
 like
 Leapt on him, and hurl'd him head-
 long, and he fell
 Stunn'd, and his creatures took and
 bare him off,
 And all was still. Then she, 'The end
 is come,
 'And I am shamed for ever;' and he
 said:¹¹⁰
 'Mine be the shame, mine was the
 sin; but rise,
 And fly to my strong castle over-seas.
 There will I hide thee till my life shall
 end,
 There hold thee with my life against
 the world.'
 She answer'd: 'Lancelot, wilt thou
 hold me so?
 Nay, friend, for we have taken our
 farewells.
 Would God that thou couldst hide me
 from myself!
 Mine is the shame, for I was wife,
 and thou
 Unwedded; yet rise now, and let us fly,
 For I will draw me into sanctuary,¹²⁰
 And bide my doom.' So Lancelot got
 her horse,
 Set her thereon, and mounted on his
 own,
 And then they rode to the divided way,
 There kiss'd, and parted weeping; for
 he past,
 Love-loyal to the least wish of the
 Queen,
 Back to his land; but she to Almes-
 bury

Fled all night long by glimmering
 waste and weald,
 And heard the spirits of the waste
 and weald
 Moan as she fled, or thought she heard
 them moan.
 And in herself she moan'd, 'Too late,
 too late!'¹³⁰
 Till in the cold wind that foreruns the
 morn,
 A blot in heaven, the raven, flying
 high,
 Croak'd, and she thought, 'He spies
 a field of death;
 For now the heathen of the Northern
 Sea,
 Lured by the crimes and frailties of
 the court,
 Begin to slay the folk and spoil the
 land.'

And when she came to Almesbury
 she spake
 There to the nuns, and said, 'Mine
 enemies
 Pursue me, but, O peaceful Sister-
 hood,
 Receive and yield me sanctuary, nor
 ask¹⁴⁰
 Her name to whom ye yield it till her
 time
 To tell you;' and her beauty, grace,
 and power
 Wrought as a charm upon them, and
 they spared
 To ask it.

So the stately Queen abode
 For many a week, unknown, among
 the nuns,
 Nor with them mix'd, nor told her
 name, nor sought,
 Wrapt in her grief, for housel or for
 shift,
 But communed only with the little
 maid,
 Who pleased her with a babbling
 heedlessness
 Which often lured her from herself;
 but now,¹⁵⁰
 This night, a rumor wildly blown
 about
 Came that Sir Modred had usurp'd
 the realm
 And leagued him with the heathen,
 while the King

Was waging war on Lancelot. Then
 she thought,
 'With what a hate the people and the
 King
 Must hate me,' and bow'd down upon
 her hands
 Silent, until the little maid, who
 brook'd
 No silence, brake it, uttering 'Late!
 so late!
 What hour, I wonder now?' and
 when she drew
 No answer, by and by began to hum
 An air the nuns had taught her:
 'Late, so late!' 161
 Which when she heard, the Queen
 look'd up, and said,
 'O maiden, if indeed ye list to sing,
 Sing, and unbind my heart that I
 may weep.'
 Whereat full willingly sang the little
 maid.

'Late, late, so late! and dark the night
 and chill!
 Late, late, so late! but we can enter still.
 Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light had we; for that we do repent,
 And learning this, the bridegroom will re-
 lent. 170
 Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'No light! so late! and dark and chill
 the night!
 O, let us in, that we may find the light!
 Too late, too late! ye cannot enter now.

'Have we not heard the bridegroom is so
 sweet?
 O, let us in, tho' late, to kiss his feet!
 No, no, too late! ye cannot enter now.'

So sang the novice, while full pas-
 sionately,
 Her head upon her hands, remember-
 ing
 Her thought when first she came,
 wept the sad Queen. 180
 Then said the little novice prattling
 to her:

'O pray you, noble lady, weep no
 more;
 But let my words—the words of one
 so small,
 Who knowing nothing knows but to
 obey,

And if I do not there is penance
 given—
 Comfort your sorrows, for they do
 not flow
 From evil done; right sure am I of
 that,
 Who see your tender grace and state-
 liness.
 But weigh your sorrows with our lord
 the King's,
 And weighing find them less; for gone
 is he 190
 To wage grim war against Sir Lance-
 lot there,
 Round that strong castle where he
 holds the Queen;
 And Modred whom he left in charge
 of all,
 The traitor—Ah, sweet lady, the
 King's grief
 For his own self, and his own Queen,
 and realm,
 Must needs be thrice as great as any
 of ours!
 For me, I thank the saints, I am not
 great;
 For if there ever come a grief to me
 I cry my cry in silence, and have
 done;
 None knows it, and my tears have
 brought me good. 200
 But even were the griefs of little
 ones
 As great as those of great ones, yet
 this grief
 Is added to the griefs the great must
 bear,
 That, howsoever much they may de-
 sire
 Silence, they cannot weep behind a
 cloud;
 As even here they talk at Almesbury
 About the good King and his wicked
 Queen,
 And were I such a King with such a
 Queen,
 Well might I wish to veil her wicked-
 ness,
 But were I such a King it could not
 be.' 210

Then to her own sad heart mutter'd
 the Queen,
 'Will the child kill me with her inno-
 cent talk?'
 But openly she answer'd, 'Must not I,

If this false traitor have displaced his lord,
Grieve with the common grief of all the realm ?'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'this all is woman's grief,
That *she* is woman, whose disloyal life
Hath wrought confusion in the Table Round
Which good King Arthur founded, years ago,
With signs and miracles and wonders, there²²⁰
At Camelot, ere the coming of the Queen.'

Then thought the Queen within herself again,
'Will the child kill me with her foolish prate ?'
But openly she spake and said to her,
'O little maid, shut in by nunnery walls,
What canst thou know of Kings and Tables Round,
Or what of signs and wonders, but the signs
And simple miracles of thy nunnery ?'

To whom the little novice garrulously:
'Yea, but I know; the land was full of signs²³⁰
And wonders ere the coming of the Queen.
So said my father, and himself was knight
Of the great Table — at the founding of it,
And rode thereto from Lyonesse; and he said
That as he rode, an hour or maybe twain
After the sunset, down the coast, he heard
Strange music, and he paused, and turning — there,
All down the lonely coast of Lyonesse,
Each with a beacon-star upon his head,
And with a wild sea-light about his feet,²⁴⁰
He saw them — headland after headland flame
Far on into the rich heart of the west.

And in the light the white mermaiden swam,
And strong man-breasted things stood from the sea,
And sent a deep sea-voice thro' all the land,
To which the little elves of chasm and cleft
Made answer, sounding like a distant horn.
So said my father — yea, and further-more,
Next morning, while he past the dim-lit woods
Himself beheld three spirits mad with joy²⁵⁰
Come dashing down on a tall wayside flower,
That shook beneath them as the thistle shakes
When three gray linnets wrangle for the seed.
And still at evenings on before his horse
The flickering fairy-circle wheel'd and broke
Flying, and link'd again, and wheel'd and broke
Flying, for all the land was full of life.
And when at last he came to Camelot,
A wreath of airy dancers hand-in-hand
Swung round the lighted lantern of the hall;²⁶⁰
And in the hall itself was such a feast
As never man had dream'd; for every knight
Had whatsoever meat he long'd for served
By hands unseen; and even as he said
Down in the cellars merry bloated things
Shoulder'd the spigot, straddling on the butts
While the wine ran; so glad were spirits and men
Before the coming of the sinful Queen.'

Then spake the Queen and somewhat bitterly,
'Were they so glad? ill prophets were they all,²⁷⁰
Spirits and men. Could none of them foresee,
Not even thy wise father with his signs

And wonders, what has fallen upon the realm ?'

To whom the novice garrulously again:

'Yea, one, a bard, of whom my father said,

Full many a noble war-song had he sung,

Even in the presence of an enemy's fleet,

Between the steep cliff and the coming wave ;

And many a mystic lay of life and death

Had chanted on the smoky mountain-tops, ²⁸⁰

When round him bent the spirits of the hills

With all their dewy hair blown back like flame.

So said my father — and that night the bard

Sang Arthur's glorious wars, and sang the King

As wellnigh more than man, and rail'd at those

Who call'd him the false son of Golois.

For there was no man knew from whence he came ;

But after tempest, when the long wave broke

All down the thundering shores of Bude and Bos,

There came a day as still as heaven, and then ²⁹⁰

They found a naked child upon the sands

Of dark Tintagil by the Cornish sea, And that was Arthur, and they foster'd him

Till he by miracle was approven King ; And that his grave should be a mystery

From all men, like his birth ; and could he find

A woman in her womanhood as great As he was in his manhood, then, he sang,

The twain together well might change the world.

But even in the middle of his song ³⁰⁰ He falter'd, and his hand fell from the harp,

And pale he turn'd, and reel'd, and would have fallen,

But that they stay'd him up ; nor would tell

His vision ; but what doubt that he foresaw

This evil work of Lancelot and the Queen ?'

Then thought the Queen, 'Lo ! they have set her on,

Our simple-seeming abbess and her nuns,

To play upon me,' and bow'd her head nor spake.

Whereat the novice crying, with clasp'd hands,

Shame on her own garrulity garrulously, ³¹⁰

Said the good nuns would check her gadding tongue

Full often, 'and, sweet lady, if I seem To vex an ear too sad to listen to me,

Unmannerly, with prattling and the tales

Which my good father told me, check me too

Nor let me shame my father's memory, one

Of noblest manners, tho' himself would say

Sir Lancelot had the noblest ; and he died,

Kill'd in a tilt, come next, five summers back,

And left me ; but of others who remain, ³²⁰

And of the two first-famed for courtesy —

And pray you check me if I ask amiss —

But pray you, which had noblest, while you moved.

Among them, Lancelot or our lord the King ?'

Then the pale Queen look'd up and answer'd her :

'Sir Lancelot, as became a noble knight,

Was gracious to all ladies, and the same

In open battle or the tilting-field Forbore his own advantage, and the King

In open battle or the tilting-field ³³⁰ Forbore his own advantage, and these two

Were the most nobly-manner'd men of
all;
For manners are not idle, but the
fruit
Of loyal nature and of noble mind.'

'Yea,' said the maid, 'be manners
such fair fruit?
Then Lancelot's needs must be a thou-
sand-fold
Less noble, being, as all rumor runs,
The most disloyal friend in all the
world.'

To which a mournful answer made
the Queen:
'O, closed about by narrowing nun-
nery-walls, ³⁴⁰
What knowest thou of the world and
all its lights
And shadows, all the wealth and all
the woe?
If ever Lancelot, that most noble
knight,
Were for one hour less noble than him-
self,
Pray for him that he scape the doom
of fire,
And weep for her who drew him to
his doom.'

'Yea,' said the little novice, 'I pray
for both;
But I should all as soon believe that
his,
Sir Lancelot's, were as noble as the
King's,
As I could think, sweet lady, yours
would be ³⁵⁰
Such as they are, were you the sinful
Queen.'

So she, like many another babbler,
hurt
Whom she would soothe, and harm'd
where she would heal;
For here a sudden flush of wrathful
heat
Fired all the pale face of the Queen,
who cried:
'Such as thou art be never maiden
more
For ever! thou their tool, set on to
plague
And play upon and harry me, petty
spy

And traitress!' When that storm of
anger brake
From Guinevere, aghast the maiden
rose, ³⁶⁰
White as her veil, and stood before
the Queen
As tremulously as foam upon the
beach
Stands in a wind, ready to break and
fly,
And when the Queen had added, 'Get
thee hence!'
Fled frightened. Then that other left
alone
Sigh'd, and began to gather heart
again,
Saying in herself: 'The simple, fear-
ful child
Meant nothing, but my own too-fear-
ful guilt,
Simpler than any child, betrays it-
self.
But help me, Heaven, for surely I re-
pent! ³⁷⁰
For what is true repentance but in
thought—
Not even in inmost thought to think
again
The sins that made the past so plea-
sant to us?
And I have sworn never to see him
more, ³⁸⁰
To see him more.'

And even in saying this,
Her memory from old ³⁸⁰ of the
mind
Went slipping back upon the golden
days
In which she saw him first, when Lan-
celot came,
Reputed the best knight and goodliest
man,
Ambassador, to yield her to his lord
Arthur, and led her forth, and far
ahead ³⁸¹
Of his and her retinue moving, they,
Rapt in sweet talk or lively, all on
love
And sport and tilts and pleasure, —
for the time
Was may-time, and as yet no sin was
dream'd, —
Rode under groves that look'd a para-
dise
Of blossom, over sheets of hyacinth

That seem'd the heavens upbreking
thro' the earth,
And on from hill to hill, and every
day
Beheld at noon in some delicious
dale ³⁹⁰
The silk pavilions of King Arthur
raised
For brief repast or afternoon repose
By couriers gone before; and on
again,
Till yet once more ere set of sun they
saw
The Dragon of the great Pendragon-
ship,
That crown'd the state pavilion of the
King,
Blaze by the rushing brook or silent
well.

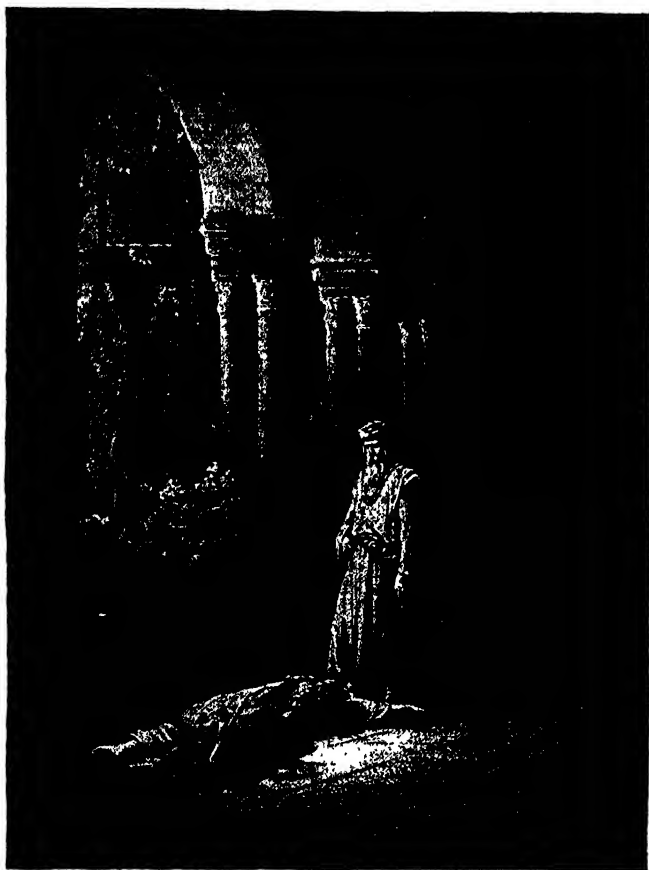
But when the Queen immersed in
such a trance,
And moving thro' the past uncon-
sciously,
Came to that point where first she saw
the King ⁴⁰⁰
Ride toward her from the city, sigh'd
to find
Her journey done, glanced at him,
thought him cold,
High, self-contain'd, and passionless,
not like him,
'Not like my Lancelot' — while she
brooded thus
And grew half-guilty in her thoughts
again,
There rode an armed warrior to the
doors.
A murmuring whisper thro' the nun-
nery ran,
Then on a sudden a cry, 'The King !'
She sat
Stiff-stricken, listening; but when
armed feet
Thro' the long gallery from the outer
doors ⁴¹⁰
Rang coming, prone from off her seat
she fell,
And grovell'd with her face against
the floor.
There with her milk-white arms and
shadowy hair
She made her face a darkness from
the King,
And in the darkness heard his armed
feet

Pause by her; then came silence, then
a voice,
Monotonous and hollow like a ghost's
Denouncing judgment, but, tho'
changed, the King's:

'Liest thou here so low, the child of
one
I honor'd, happy, dead before thy
shame? ⁴²⁰
Well is it that no child is born of thee.
The children born of thee are sword
and fire,
Red ruin, and the breaking up of laws,
The craft of kindred and the godless
hosts
Of heathen swarming o'er the North-
ern Sea;
Whom I, while yet Sir Lancelot, my
right arm,
The mightiest of my knights, abode
with me,
Have everywhere about this land of
Christ
In twelve great battles ruining over-
thrown.
And knowest thou now from whence
I come — from him, ⁴³⁰
From waging bitter war with him;
and he,
That did not shun to smite me in
worse way,
Had yet that grace of courtesy in him
left,
He spared to lift his hand against the
King
Who made him knight. But many a
knight was slain;
And many more and all his kith and
kin
Clave to him, and abode in his own
land.
And many more when Modred raised
revolt,
Forgetful of their troth and fealty,
clave
To Modred, and a remnant stays with
me. ⁴⁴⁰
And of this remnant will I leave a
part,
True men who love me still, for whom
I live,
To guard thee in the wild hour com-
ing on,
Lest but a hair of this low head be
harm'd.

Fear not ; thou shalt be guarded till
 my death.
 Howbeit I know, if ancient prophecies
 Have err'd not, that I march to meet
 my doom.
 Thou hast not made my life so sweet
 to me,
 That I the King should greatly care to
 live ;
 For thou hast spoilt the purpose of
 my life.
 Bear with me for the last time while
 I show,
 Even for thy sake, the sin which thou
 hast sinn'd.
 For when the Roman left us, and
 their law
 Relax'd its hold upon us, and the
 ways
 Were fill'd with rapine, here and
 there a deed
 Of prowess done redress'd a random
 wrong.
 But I was first of all the kings who
 drew
 The knighthood-errant of this realm
 and all
 The realms together under me, their
 Head,
 In that fair Order of my Table Round,
 A glorious company, the flower of
 men,
 To serve as model for the mighty
 world,
 And be the fair beginning of a time.
 I made them lay their hands in mine
 and swear
 To reverence the King, as if he were
 Their conscience, and their conscience
 as their King,
 To break the heathen and uphold the
 Christ,
 To ride abroad redressing human
 wrongs,
 To speak no slander, no, nor listen to
 it,
 To honor his own word as if his God's,
 To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
 To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
 And worship her by years of noble
 deeds,
 Until they won her ; for indeed I
 knew
 Of no more subtle master under hea-
 ven
 Than is the maiden passion for a maid,

Not only to keep down the base in
 man,
 But teach high thought, and amiable
 words
 And courtliness, and the desire of
 fame,
 And love of truth, and all that makes
 a man.
 And all this throve before I wedded
 thee,
 Believing, "Lo, mine helpmate, one
 to feel
 My purpose and rejoicing in my
 joy !"
 Then came thy shameful sin with
 Lancelot ;
 Then came the sin of Tristram and
 Isolt ;
 Then others, following these my
 mightiest knights,
 And drawing foul ensample from fai
 names,
 Sinn'd also, till the loathsome oppo-
 site
 Of all my heart had destined did ob-
 tain,
 And all thro' thee ! so that this life of
 mine
 I guard as God's high gift from scathe
 and wrong,
 Not greatly care to lose ; but rather
 think
 How sad it were for Arthur, should
 he live,
 To sit once more within his lonely
 hall,
 And miss the wonted number of my
 knights,
 And miss to hear high talk of noble
 deeds
 As in the golden days before thy sin.
 For which of us who might be left
 could speak
 Of the pure heart, nor seem to glance
 at thee ?
 And in thy bowers of Camelot or of
 Usk
 Thy shadow still would glide from
 room to room,
 And I should evermore be vext with
 thee
 In hanging robe or vacant ornament,
 Or ghostly footfall echoing on the
 stair.
 For think not, tho' thou wouldst not
 love thy lord,



' He paused, and in the pause she crept an inch
Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet '

Thy lord has wholly lost his love for
thee.
I am not made of so slight elements.
Yet must I leave thee, woman, to thy
shame.
I hold that man the worst of public
foes
Who either for his own or children's
sake,
To save his blood from scandal, lets
the wife

Whom he knows false abide and rule
the house:
For being thro' his cowardice allow'd
Her station, taken everywhere for-
pure,
She like a new disease, unknown to
men,
Creeps, no precaution used, among
the crowd,
Makes wicked lightnings of her eyes,
and saps

The fealty of our friends, and stirs the pulse
 With devil's leaps, and poisons half the young.
 Worst of the worst were that man he that reigns !
 Better the King's waste hearth and aching heart
 Than thou reseated in thy place of light,
 The mockery of my people and their bane !

He paused, and in the pause she crept an inch
 Nearer, and laid her hands about his feet.
 Far off a solitary trumpet blew.
 Then waiting by the doors the war-horse neigh'd
 As at a friend's voice, and he spake again :

'Yet think not that I come to urge thy crimes ;
 I did not come to curse thee, Guinevere,
 I, whose vast pity almost makes me die
 To see thee, laying there thy golden head,
 My pride in happier summers, at my feet.
 The wrath which forced my thoughts on that fierce law,
 The doom of treason and the flaming death,—
 When first I learnt thee hidden here, — is past.
 The pang — which, while I weigh'd thy heart with one
 Too wholly true to dream untruth in thee,
 Made my tears burn — is also past — in part.
 And all is past, the sin is sinn'd, and I,
 Lo, I forgive thee, as Eternal God Forgives ! do thou for thine own soul the rest.
 But how to take last leave of all I loved ?
 O golden hair, with which I used to play
 Not knowing ! O imperial-moulded form,

And beauty such as never woman wore,
 Until it came a kingdom's curse with thee —
 I cannot touch thy lips, they are not mine,
 But Lancelot's ; nay, they never were the King's.
 I cannot take thy hand ; that too is flesh,
 And in the flesh thou hast sinn'd ; and mine own flesh,
 Here looking down on thine polluted, cries,
 "I loathe thee ;" yet not less, O Guinevere,
 For I was ever virgin save for thee,
 My love thro' flesh hath wrought into my life
 So far that my doom is, I love thee still.
 Let no man dream but that I love thee still.
 Perchance, and so thou purify thy soul,
 And so thou lean on our fair father Christ,
 Hereafter in that world where all are pure
 We two may meet before high God, and thou
 Wilt spring to me, and claim me thine, and know
 I am thine husband — not a smaller soul,
 Nor Lancelot, nor another. Leave me that,
 I charge thee, my last hope. Now must I hence.
 Thro' the thick night I hear the trumpet blow.
 They summon me their King to lead mine hosts
 Far down to that great battle in the west,
 Where I must strike against the man they call
 My sister's son — no kin of mine, who leagues
 With Lords of the White Horse, heathen, and knights,
 Traitors — and strike him dead, and meet myself
 Death, or I know not what mysterious doom.
 And thou remaining here wilt learn the event ;

But hither shall I never come again,
Never lie by thy side, see thee no
more —
Farewell !'

And while she grovell'd at his feet,
She felt the King's breath wander o'er
her neck,
And in the darkness o'er her fallen
head
Perceived the waving of his hands
that blest. 580

Then, listening till those armed
steps were gone,
Rose the pale Queen, and in her an-
guish found
The casement : ' peradventure,' so she
thought,
' If I might see his face, and not be
seen.'
And lo, he sat on horseback at the
door !
And near him the sad nuns with each
a light
stood, and he gave them charge about
the Queen,
To guard and foster her for evermore.
And while he spake to these his helm
was lower'd,
To which for crest the golden dragon
clung 590
Of Britain ; so she did not see the face,
Which then was as an angel's, but she
saw,
Wet with the mists and smitten by the
lights,
The Dragon of the great Pendragon-
ship
Blaze, making all the night a steam of
fire.
And even then he turn'd ; and more
and more
The moony vapor rolling round the
King,
Who seem'd the phantom of a giant
in it,
Enwound him fold by fold, and made
him gray
And grayer, till himself became as
mist 600
Before her, moving ghostlike to his
doom.

Then she stretch'd out her arms and
cried aloud,

' O Arthur !' there her voice brake
suddenly,
Then — as a stream that spouting from
a cliff
Falls in mid air, but gathering at the
base
Re-makes itself, and flashes down the
vale —
Went on in passionate utterance :

' Gone — my lord !
Gone thro' my sin to slay and to be
slain !
And he forgave me, and I could not
speak.
Farewell ? I should have answer'd
his farewell. 610
His mercy choked me. Gone, my
lord the King,
My own true lord ! how dare I call
him mine ?
The shadow of another cleaves to me,
And makes me one pollution. He,
the King,
Call'd me polluted. Shall I kill my-
self ?
What help in that ? I cannot kill my
sin,
If soul be soul, nor can I kill my
shame ;
No, nor by living can I live it down.
The days will grow to weeks, the
weeks to months,
The months will add themselves and
make the years, 620
The years will roll into the centuries,
And mine will ever be a name of
scorn.
I must not dwell on that defeat of
fame.
Let the world be ; that is but of the
world —
What else ? what hope ? I think there
was a hope,
Except he mock'd me when he spake
of hope ;
His hope he call'd it ; but he never
mocks,
For mockery is the fume of little
hearts.
And blessed be the King, who hath
forgiven
My wickedness to him, and left me
hope 630
That in mine own heart I can live
down sin .

And be his mate hereafter in the heavens

Before high God! Ah great and gentle lord,

Who wast, as is the conscience of a saint

Among his warring senses, to thy knights—

To whom my false voluptuous pride, that took

Full easily all impressions from below, Would not look up, or half-despised the height

To which I would not or I could not climb—

I thought I could not breathe in that fine air, ⁶⁴⁰

That pure severity of perfect light— I yearn'd for warmth and color which I found

In Lancelot—now I see thee what thou art,

Thou art the highest and most human too,

Not Lancelot, nor another. Is there none

Will tell the King I love him tho' so late?

Now—ere he goes to the great battle? none!

Myself must tell him in that purer life, But now it were too daring. Ah my God,

What might I not have made of thy fair world, ⁶⁵⁰

Had I but loved thy highest creature here?

It was my duty to have loved the highest;

It surely was my profit had I known; It would have been my pleasure had I seen.

We needs must love the highest when we see it,

Not Lancelot, nor another.'

Here her hand

Grasp'd made her vail her eyes. She look'd and saw

The novice, weeping, suppliant, and said to her,

'Yea, little maid, for am I not forgiven?'

Then glancing up beheld the holy nuns

All round her, weeping; and her heart was loosed ⁶⁶¹

Within her, and she wept with these and said:

'Ye know me then, that wicked one, who broke

The vast design and purpose of the King.

O, shut me round with narrowing nunnery-walls,

Meek maidens, from the voices crying, "Shame!"

I must not scorn myself; he loves me still.

Let no one dream but that he loves me still.

So let me, if you do not shudder at me,

Nor shun to call me sister, dwell with you; ⁶⁷⁰

Wear black and white, and be a nun like you,

Fast with your fasts, not feasting with your feasts;

Grieve with your griefs, not grieving at your joys,

But not rejoicing; mingle with your rites;

Pray and be pray'd for; lie before your shrines;

Do each low office of your holy house; Walk your dim cloister, and distribute

dole To poor sick people, richer in His eyes

Who ransom'd us, and haler too than I; And treat their loathsome hurts and

heal mine own; ⁶⁸⁰

And so wear out in alms-deed and in prayer

The sombre close of that voluptuous day

Which wrought the ruin of my lord the King.'

She said. They took her to themselves; and she

Still hoping, fearing 'Is it yet too late?'

Dwelt with them, till in time their abbess died.

Then she, for her good deeds and her pure life,

And for the power of ministration in her,

And likewise for the high rank she had borne,

Was chosen abbess, there, an abbess,
lived ⁶⁹⁰
For three brief years, and there, an
abbess, past
To where beyond these voices there
is peace.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR

THAT story which the bold Sir Bedi-
vere,
First made and latest left of all the
knights,
Told, when the man was no more than
a voice
In the white winter of his age, to those
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other
minds.

For on their march to westward,
Bedivere,
Who slowly paced among the slum-
bering host,
Heard in his tent the moanings of the
King:

'I found Him in the shining of the
stars,
I mark'd Him in the flowering of His
fields, ¹⁰
But in His ways with men I find Him
not.
I waged His wars, and now I pass and
die.
O me! for why is all around us here
As if some lesser god had made the
world,
But had not force to shape it as he
would,
Till the High God behold it from be-
yond,
And enter it, and make it beautiful?
Or else as if the world were wholly
fair,
But that these eyes of men are dense
and dim,
And have not power to see it as it is—
Perchance, because we see not to the
close; — ²¹
For I, being simple, thought to work
His will,
And have but stricken with the sword
in vain,
And all whereon I lean'd in wife and
friend

Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm
Reels back into the beast, and is no
more.

My God, thou hast forgotten me in
my death!

Nay—God my Christ—I pass but
shall not die.'

Then, ere that last weird battle in
the west,

There came on Arthur sleeping, Ga-
wain kill'd ³⁰

In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain
blown

Along a wandering wind, and past his
ear

Went shrilling: 'Hollow, hollow all
delight!

Hail, King! to-morrow thou shalt pass
away.

Farewell! there is an isle of rest for
thee.

And I am blown along a wandering
wind,

And hollow, hollow, hollow all de-
light!'

And fainter onward, like wild birds
that change

Their season in the night and wail
their way

From cloud to cloud, down the long
wind the dream ⁴⁰

Shrill'd; but in going mingled with
dim cries

Far in the moonlit haze among the
hills,

As of some lonely city sack'd by night,
When all is lost, and wife and child
with wail

Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke
and call'd:

'Whospake? A dream. O, light upon
the wind,

Thine, Gawain, was the voice—are
these dim cries

Thine? or doth all that haunts the
waste and wild

Mourn, knowing it will go along with
me?'

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere
and spake: ⁵⁰

'O me, my King, let pass whatever
will,

Elves, and the harmless glamour of
the field;

But in their stead thy name and glory
 cling
 To all high places like a golden cloud
 For ever; but as yet thou shalt not
 pass.
 Light was Gawain in life, and light in
 death
 Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the
 man;
 And care not thou for dreams from
 him, but rise—
 I hear the steps of Modred in the west,
 And with him many of thy people,
 and knights ⁶⁰
 Once thine, whom thou hast loved,
 but grosser grown
 Than heathen, spitting at their vows
 and thee.
 Right well in heart they know thee
 for the King.
 Arise, go forth and conquer as of old.'

Then spake King Arthur to Sir
 Bedivere:
 'Far other is this battle in the west
 Whereto we move than when we
 strove in youth,
 And brake the petty kings, and fought
 with Rome,
 Or thrust the heathen from the Roman
 wall,
 And shook him thro' the north. Ill
 doom is mine ⁷⁰
 To war against my people and my
 knights.
 The king who fights his people fights
 himself.
 And they my knights, who loved me
 once, the stroke
 That strikes them dead is as my death
 to me.
 Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way
 Thro' this blind haze which, ever since
 I saw
 One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
 Hath folded in the passes of the
 world.'

Then rose the King and moved his
 host by night,
 And ever push'd Sir Modred, league
 by league, ⁸⁰
 Back to the sunset bound of Lyon-
 nesse—
 A land of old upheaven from the abyss
 By fire, to sink into the abyss again;

Where fragments of forgotten peoples
 dwelt,
 And the long mountains ended in a
 coast
 Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
 The phantom circle of a moaning
 sea.
 There the pursuer could pursue no
 more,
 And he that fled no further fly the
 King;
 And there, that day when the great
 light of heaven ⁹⁰
 Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year,
 On the waste sand by the waste sea
 they closed.
 Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a
 fight
 Like this last, dim, weird battle of the
 west.
 A death-white mist slept over sand
 and sea,
 Whereof the chill, to him who breathed
 it, drew
 Down with his blood, till all his heart
 was cold
 With formless fear; and even on
 Arthur fell
 Confusion, since he saw not whom he
 fought.
 For friend and foe were shadows in
 the mist, ¹⁰⁰
 And friend slew friend not knowing
 whom he slew;
 And some had visions out of golden
 youth,
 And some beheld the faces of old
 ghosts
 Look in upon the battle; and in the
 mist
 Was many a noble deed, many a base,
 And chance and craft and strength in
 single fights,
 And ever and anon with host to host
 Shocks, and the splintering spear, the
 hard mail hewn,
 Shield-breakings, and the clash of
 brands, the crash
 Of battle-axes on shatter'd helms, and
 shrieks ¹¹⁰
 After the Christ, of those who falling
 down
 Look'd up for heaven, and only saw
 the mist;
 And shouts of heathen and the traitor
 knights,

Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous
blasphemies,
Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring
of the lungs
In that close mist, and cryings for the
light,
Moans of the dying, and voices of the
dead.

Last, as by some one death-bed
after wail
Of suffering, silence follows, or thro'
death
Or death-like swoon, thus over all
that shore, ¹²⁰
Save for some whisper of the seething
seas,
A dead hush fell; but when the dolor-
ous day
Grew drearier toward twilight falling,
came
A bitter wind, clear from the north,
and blew
The mist aside, and with that wind
the tide
Rose, and the pale King glanced
across the field
Of battle. But no man was moving
there;
Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,
Nor yet of heathen; only the wan
wave
Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
Swaying the helpless hands, and up
and down ¹³¹
Tumbling the hollow helmets of the
fallen,
And shiver'd brands that once had
fought with Rome,
And rolling far along the gloomy
shores
The voice of days of old and days to
be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir
Bedivere,
And whiter than the mist that all day
long
Had held the field of battle was the
King:

'Hearest thou this great voice that
shakes the world,
And wastes the narrow realm whereon
we move, ¹⁴⁰
And beats upon the faces of the dead,

My dead, as tho' they had not died
for me?—
O Bedivere, for on my heart hath
fallen
Confusion, till I know not what I
am,
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be
king;
Behold, I seem but king among the
dead.'

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere:
'My King!
King everywhere! and so the dead
have kings,
There also will I worship thee as king.
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I
live ¹⁵⁰
Who love thee; but who hates thee,
he that brought
The heathen back among us, yonder
stands,
Modred, unarm'd, the traitor of thine
house.'

Then spake the King: 'My house
hath been my doom.
But call not thou this traitor of my
house
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof
with me.
My house are rather they who swear
my vows,
Yea, even while they brake them,
own'd me king.
And well for thee, saying in my dark
hour,
When all the purport of my throne
hath fail'd, ¹⁶⁰
That quick or dead thou holdest me
for king.
King am I, whatsoever be their cry;
And one last act of kinghood shalt
thou see
Yet, ere I pass.' And uttering this
the King
Made at the man. Then Modred smote
his liege
Hard on that helm which many a
heathen sword
Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one
blow,
Striking the last stroke with Excali-
bur,
Slew him, and, all but slain himself,
he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle
roll'd 170
Among the mountains by the winter
sea,
Until King Arthur's Table, man by
man,
Had fallen in Lyonesse about their
lord,
King Arthur; then, because his wound
was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the
field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren
land.
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
side
Lay a great water, and the moon was
full. 180

Then spake King Arthur to Sir
Bedivere:
'The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous
knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such
a sleep
They sleep—the men I loved. I
think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly
deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the
halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made,—
Tho' Merlin sware that I should come
again 191
To rule once more—but let what will
be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till
morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excal-
ibur,
Which was my pride; for thou re-
memberest how
In those old days, one summer noon,
an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the
lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
derful,
Holding the sword—and how I row'd
across 200

And took it, and have worn it, like a
king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known.
But now delay not; take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle
mere;
Watch what thou seest, and lightly
bring me word.'

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
'It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee
thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the
helm—
A little thing may harm a wounded
man; 210
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring
thee word.'

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine
he stopt,
And in the moon athwart the place of
tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of an-
cient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-
wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He,
stepping down
By zigzag paths and juts of pointed
rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Ex-
calibur, 220
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter
moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud,
ran forth
And sparkled keen with frost against
the hilt;
For all the haft twinkled with dia-
mond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-
work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so
long
That both his eyes were dazzled as he
stood,
This way and that dividing the swift
mind,
In act to throw; but at the last it
seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd 230

There in the many-knotted water-flags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the
marge.

So strode he back slow to the wounded
King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir
Bedivere:

'Hast thou perform'd my mission
which I gave?

What is it thou hast seen? or what
hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-
vere:

'I heard the ripple washing in the
reeds,

And the wild water lapping on the
crag.'

To whom replied King Arthur, faint
and pale:

'Thou hast betray'd thy nature and
thy name,

Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;
For surer sign had follow'd, either
hand,

Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to
lie.

Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go
again,

As thou art lief and dear, and do the
thing

I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring
me word.'

Then went Sir Bedivere the second
time

Across the ridge, and paced beside the
mere,

Counting the dewy pebbles, fixt in
thought;

But when he saw the wonder of the
hilt,

How curiously and strangely chased,
he smote

His palms together, and he cried aloud:

'And if indeed I cast the brand
away,

Surely a precious thing, one worthy
note,

Should thus be lost for ever from the
earth,

Which might have pleased the eyes of
many men.

What good should follow this, if this
were done? ²⁶⁰

What harm, undone? Deep harm to
disobey,

Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king

demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?

The King is sick, and knows not what
he does.

What record or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty
breath

And rumors of a doubt? But were
this kept,

Stored in some treasure-house of
mighty kings,

Some one might show it at a joust of
arms,

Saying: "King Arthur's sword, Ex-
calibur,

Wrought by the lonely Maiden of the
Lake.

Nine years she wrought it, sitting in
the deeps

Upon the hidden bases of the hills."
So might some old man speak in the

aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.

But now much honor and much fame
were lost.'

So spake he, clouded with his own
conceit,

And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the

wounded King. ²⁸⁰

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing
heavily:

'What is it thou hast seen? or what
hast heard?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-
vere:

'I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the

reeds.'

To whom replied King Arthur,
much in wrath:

'Ah miserable, and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is
me!

Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his
eye ²⁹⁰

That bow'd the will. I see thee what
thou art,

For thou, the latest-left of all my
knights,

In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the pre-
cious hilt;

Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the
eyes.

Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get
thee hence;

But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my
hands.' ³⁰⁰

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and
ran,

And, leaping down the ridges lightly,
plunged

Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd
the sword,

And strongly wheel'd and threw it.
The great brand

Made lightnings in the splendor of the
moon,

And flashing round and round, and
whirl'd in an arch,

Shot like a streamer of the northern
morn,

Seen where the moving isles of win-
ter shock

By night, with noises of the Northern
Sea.

So flash'd and fell the brand Excali-
bur; ³¹⁰

But ere he dipt the surface, rose an
arm

Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
derful,

And caught him by the hilt, and bran-
dish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in
the mere.

And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing
thicker breath:

'Now see I by thine eyes that this is
done.

Speak out; what is it thou hast heard,
or seen?'

And answer made the bold Sir Bedi-
vere:

'Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest
the gems ³²⁰

Should blind my purpose, for I never
saw,

Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I
die,

Not tho' I live three lives of mortal
men,

So great a miracle as yonder hilt.

Then with both hands I flung him,
wheeling him;

But when I look'd again, behold an
arm,

Clothed in white samite, mystic, won-
derful,

That caught him by the hilt, and bran-
dish'd him

Three times, and drew him under in
the mere.'

And answer made King Arthur,
breathing hard: ³³⁰

'My end draws nigh; 'tis time that
I were gone.

Make broad thy shoulders to receive
my weight,

And bear me to the margin; yet I
fear

My wound hath taken cold, and I
shall die.'

So saying, from the pavement he
half rose,

Slowly, with pain, reclining on his
arm,

And looking wistfully with wide blue
eyes

As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,

And would have spoken, but he found
not words; ³⁴⁰

Then took with care, and kneeling on
one knee,

O'er both his shoulders drew the lan-
guid hands,

And rising bore him thro' the place of
tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur
panted hard,

Like one that feels a nightmare on his
bed

When all the house is mute. So sigh'd
the King,

Muttering and murmuring at his ear,
 'Quick, quick!
 I fear it is too late, and I shall die.'
 But the other swiftly strode from ridge
 to ridge,
 Clothed with his breath, and looking,
 as he walk'd, ³⁵⁰
 Larger than human on the frozen
 hills.
 He heard the deep behind him, and a
 cry
 Before. His own thought drove him
 like a goad.
 Dry clash'd his harness in the icy
 caves
 And barren chasms, and all to left and
 right
 The bare black cliff clang'd round him,
 as he based
 His feet on juts of slippery crag that
 rang
 Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed
 heels —
 And on a sudden, lo, the level lake,
 And the long glories of the winter
 moon! ³⁶⁰

Then saw they how there hove a
 dusky barge,
 Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to
 stern,
 Beneath them; and descending they
 were ware
 That all the decks were dense with
 stately forms,
 Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a
 dream — by these
 Three queens with crowns of gold —
 and from them rose
 A cry that shiver'd to the tingling
 stars,
 And, as it were one voice, an agony
 Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
 All night in a waste land, where no
 one comes, ³⁷⁰
 Or hath come, since the making of the
 world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, 'Place me
 in the barge.'
 So to the barge they came. There
 those three queens
 Put forth their hands, and took the
 King, and wept.
 But she that rose the tallest of them
 all

And fairest laid his head upon her
 lap,
 And loosed the shatter'd casque, and
 chafed his hands,
 And call'd him by his name, complain-
 ing loud,
 And dropping bitter tears against a
 brow
 Striped with dark blood; for all his
 face was white ³⁸⁰
 And colorless, and like the wither'd
 moon
 Smote by the fresh beam of the spring-
 ing east;
 And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd
 with drops
 Of onset; and the light and lustrous
 curls —
 That made his forehead like a rising
 sun
 High from the dais-throne — were
 parch'd with dust,
 Or, clotted into points and hanging
 loose,
 Mixt with the knightly growth that
 fringed his lips.
 So like a shatter'd column lay the
 King;
 Not like that Arthur who, with lance
 in rest, ³⁹⁰
 From spur to plume a star of tourna-
 ment,
 Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and
 charged
 Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedi-
 vere:
 'Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I
 go?
 Where shall I hide my forehead and
 my eyes?
 For now I see the true old times are
 dead,
 When every morning brought a noble
 chance,
 And every chance brought out a noble
 knight.
 Such times have been not since the
 light that led ⁴⁰⁰
 The holy Elders with the gift of
 myrrh.
 But now the whole Round Table is
 dissolved
 Which was an image of the mighty
 world;

And I, the last, go forth companion-
less,
And the days darken round me, and
the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other
minds.'

And slowly answer'd Arthur from
the barge :
'The old order changeth, yielding
place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many
ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt
the world. 410
Comfort thyself; what comfort is in
me ?

I have lived my life, and that which I
have done

May He within himself make pure !
but thou,

If thou shouldst never see my face
again,

Pray for my soul. More things are
wrought by prayer

Than this world dreams of. Where-
fore, let thy voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and
day.

For what are men better than sheep
or goats

That nourish a blind life within the
brain,

If, knowing God, they lift not hands
of prayer 420

Both for themselves and those who
call them friend ?

For so the whole round earth is every
way

Bound by gold chains about the feet
of God.

But now farewell. I am going a long
way

With these thou seest—if indeed I
go—

For all my mind is clouded with a
doubt—

To the island-valley of Avilion ;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any

snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly ; but it
lies

Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with or-
chard lawns 430

And bowery hollows crown'd with
summer sea,

Where I will heal me of my grievous
wound.'

So said he, and the barge with oar
and sail

Moved from the brink, like some full-
breasted swan

That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes

the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir
Bedivere

Revolving many memories, till the
hull

Look'd one black dot against the verge
of dawn,

And on the mere the wailing died
away. 440

But when that moan had past for
evermore,

The stillness of the dead world's win-
ter dawn

Amazed him, and he groan'd, 'The
King is gone.'

And therewithal came on him the
weird rhyme,

'From the great deep to the great
deep he goes.'

Whereat he slowly turn'd and slowly
clomb

The last hard footstep of that iron
crag,

Thence mark'd the black hull moving
yet, and cried:

'He passes to be king among the dead,
And after healing of his grievous

wound 450
He comes again ; but—if he come no
more—

O me, be yon dark queens in yon
black boat,

Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three
whereat we gazed

On that high day, when, clothed with
living light,

They stood before his throne in silence,
friends

Of Arthur, who should help him at
his need ?'

Then from the dawn it seem'd there
came, but faint

As from beyond the limit of the world,
Like the last echo born of a great cry,

Sounds, as if some fair city were one
voice⁴⁶⁰
Around a king returning from his wars.

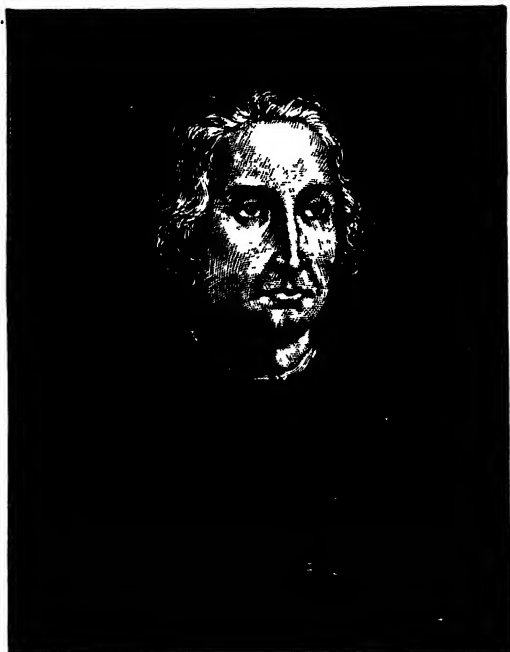
Thereat once more he moved about,
and clomb
Even to the highest he could climb,
and saw,
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of
hand,
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare
the King,
Down that long water opening on the
deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on,
and go
From less to less and vanish into
light.
And the new sun rose bringing the
new year.

TO THE QUEEN

O LOYAL to the royal in thyself,
And loyal to thy land, as this to
thee —
Bear witness, that rememberable day,
When, pale as yet and fever-worn, the
Prince
Who scarce had pluck'd his flickering
life again
From halfway down the shadow of
the grave
Past with thee thro' thy people and
their love,
And London roll'd one tide of joy thro'
all
Her trebled millions, and loud leagues
of man
And welcome! witness, too, the silent
cry,¹⁰
The prayer of many a race and creed,
and clime —
Thunderless lightnings striking un-
der sea
From sunset and sunrise of all thy
realm,
And that true North, whereof we
lately heard
A strain to shame us, 'Keep you to
yourselves;
So loyal is too costly! friends— your
love
Is but a burthen; loose the bond, and
go.'

Is this the tone of empire? here the
faith
That made us rulers? this, indeed, her
voice
And meaning whom the roar of Hou-
goumont²⁰
Left mightiest of all peoples under
heaven?
What shock has fool'd her since, that
she should speak
So feebly? wealthier — wealthier —
hour by hour!
The voice of Britain, or a sinking
land,
Some third-rate isle half-lost among
her seas?
There rang her voice, when the full
city peal'd
Thee and thy Prince! The loyal to
their crown
Are loyal to their own far sons, who
love
Our ocean-empire with her boundless
homes
For ever-broadening England, and
her throne³⁰
In our vast Orient, and one isle, one
isle,
That knows not her own greatness; if
she knows
And dreads it we are fallen. — But
thou, my Queen,
Not for itself, but thro' thy living
love
For one to whom I made it o'er his
grave
Sacred, accept this old imperfect tale,
New-old, and shadowing Sense at war
with Soul,
Ideal manhood closed in real man,
Rather than that gray king whose
name, a ghost,
Streams like a cloud, man-shaped,
from mountain peak,⁴⁰
And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still;
or him
Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Mal-
leor's, one
Touch'd by the adulterous finger of a
time
That hover'd between war and wan-
tonness,
And crownings and dethronements.
Take withal
Thy poet's blessing, and his trust that
Heaven

<p>Will blow the tempest in the distance back From thine and ours; for some are scared, who mark, Or wisely or unwisely, signs of storm, Waverings of every vane with every wind, And wordy trucklings to the transient⁵⁰ hour, And fierce or careless looseners of the faith, And Softness breeding scorn of simple life, Or Cowardice, the child of lust for gold, Or Labor, with a groan and not a voice, Or Art with poisonous honey stolen from France,</p>	<p>And that which knows, but careful for itself, And that which knows not, ruling that which knows To its own harm. The goal of this great world Lies beyond sight; yet — if ours slowly- grown⁶⁰ And crown'd Republic's crowning common sense, That saved her many times, not fail — their fears Are morning shadows huger than the shapes That cast them, not those gloomier which forego The darkness of that battle in the west Where all of high and holy dies away.</p>
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CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS (see p. 603)

BALLADS AND OTHER POEMS

TO ALFRED TENNYSON

MY GRANDSON

GOLDEN-HAIR'D Ally whose name is
 one with mine,
 Crazy with laughter and babble and
 earth's new wine,
 Now that the flower of a year and a
 half is thine,
 O little blossom, O mine, and mine of
 mine,
 Glorious poet who never hast written
 a line,
 Laugh, for the name at the head of
 my verse is thine.
 Mayst thou never be wrong'd by the
 name that is mine!

THE FIRST QUARREL

(IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT)

I

'WAIT a little,' you say, 'you are sure
 it'll all come right,'
 But the boy was born i' trouble, an'
 looks so wan an' so white;
 Wait! an' once I ha' waited — I had n't
 to wait for long.
 Now I wait, wait, wait for Harry. —
 No, no, you are doing me
 wrong!
 Harry and I were married; the boy
 can hold up his head,
 The boy was born in wedlock, but
 after my man was dead;

I ha' work'd for him fifteen years, an'
I work an' I wait to the end.
I am all alone in the world, an' you
are my only friend.

II

Doctor, if *you* can wait, I'll tell you
the tale o' my life.
When Harry an' I were children, he
call'd me his own little wife; 10
I was happy when I was with him,
an' sorry when he was away,
An' when we play'd together, I loved
him better than play;
He workt me the daisy chain—he
made me the cowslip ball,
He fought the boys that were rude,
an' I loved him better than all.
Passionate girl tho' I was, an' often at
home in disgrace,
I never could quarrel with Harry—I
had but to look in his face.

III

There was a farmer in Dorset of
Harry's kin, that had need
Of a good stout lad at his farm; he
sent, an' the father agreed;
So Harry was bound to the Dorsetshire
farm for years an' for years; 19
I walk'd with him down to the quay,
poor lad, an' we parted in tears.
The boat was beginning to move, we
heard them a-ringing the bell,
'I'll never love any but you, God bless
you, my own little Nell.'

IV

I was a child, an' he was a child, an'
he came to harm;
There was a girl, a hussy, that workt
with him up at the farm,
One had deceived her an' left her alone
with her sin an' her shame,
And so she was wicked with Harry;
the girl was the most to blame.

V

And years went over till I that was
little had grown so tall
The men would say of the maids, 'Our
Nelly's the flower of 'em all.'
I did n't take heed o' *them*, but I taught
myself all I could
To make a good wife for Harry, when
Harry came home for good. 20

VI

Often I seem'd unhappy, and often as
happy too,
For I heard it abroad in the fields, 'I'll
never love any but you;'
'I'll never love any but you,' the
morning song of the lark;
'I'll never love any but you,' the
nightingale's hymn in the dark.

VII

And Harry came home at last, but he
look'd at me sidelong and shy,
Vext me a bit, till he told me that so
many years had gone by,
I had grown so handsome and tall—
that I might ha' forgot him
somehow—
For he thought—there were other
lads—he was fear'd to look at
me now.

VIII

Hard was the frost in the field, we
were married o' Christmas day,
Married among the red berries, an' all
as merry as May— 40
Those were the pleasant times, my
house an' my man were my
pride,
We seem'd like ships i' the Channell
a-sailing with wind an' tide.

IX

But work was scant in the Isle, tho'
he tried the villages round,
So Harry went over the Solent to see
if work could be found;
An' he wrote: 'I ha' six weeks' work,
little wife, so far as I know;
I'll come for an hour to-morrow, an'
kiss you before I go.'

X

So I set to righting the house, for
was n't he coming that day?
An' I hit on an old deal-box that was
push'd in a corner away,
It was full of old odds an' ends, an' a
letter along wi' the rest,
I had better ha' put my naked hand
in a hornets' nest. 50

XI

'Sweetheart,'—this was the letter—
this was the letter I read—

'You promised to find me work near you, an' I wish I was dead —
Did n't you kiss me an' promise? you have n't done it, my lad,
An' I almost died o' your going away,
an' I wish that I had.'

XII

I too wish that I had — in the pleasant times that had past,
Before I quarrell'd with Harry — *my* quarrel — the first an' the last.

XIII

For Harry came in, an' I flung him the letter that drove me wild,
An' he told it me all at once, as simple as any child,
'What can it matter, my lass, what I did wi' my single life?
I ha' been as true to you as ever a man to his wife; 60
An' *she* wasn't one o' the worst.'
'Then,' I said, 'I'm none o' the best.'

An' he smiled at me, 'Ain't you, my love? Come, come, little wife, let it rest!
The man isn't like the woman, no need to make such a stir.'
But he anger'd me all the more, an' I said, 'You were keeping with her,
When I was a-loving you all along an' the same as before.'

An' he didn't speak for a while, an' he anger'd me more and more.

Then he patted my hand in his gentle way, 'Let bygones be!'

'Bygones! you kept yours hush'd,' I said, 'when you married me!

By-gones ma' be come-agains; an' *she* — in her shame an' her sin —

You'll have her to nurse my child, if I die o' my lying in! 70

You'll make her its second mother! I hate her — an' I hate you!'

Ah, Harry, my man, you had better ha' beaten me black an' blue

Than ha' spoken as kind as you did, when I were so crazy wi' spite,

Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it'll all come right.'

XIV

An' he took three turns in the rain, an' I watch'd him, an' when he came in

I felt that my heart was hard; he was all wet thro' to the skin,

An' I never said, 'off wi' the wet,' I never said, 'on wi' the dry,'

So I knew my heart was hard, when he came to bid me good-bye.

'You said that you hated me, Ellen, but that is n't true, you know;

I am going to leave you a bit — you'll kiss me before I go?' 80

XV

'Going! you're going to her — kiss her — if you will,' I said —

I was near my time wi' the boy, I must ha' been light i' my head —

'I had sooner be cursed than kiss'd!'
— I didn't know well what I meant,

But I turn'd my face from *him*, an' he turn'd *his* face an' he went.

XVI

And then he sent me a letter, 'I've gotten my work to do;

You would n't kiss me, my lass, an' I never loved any but you;

I am sorry for all the quarrel an' sorry for what she wrote,

I ha' six weeks' work in Jersey an' go to-night by the boat.'

XVII

An' the wind began to rise, an' I thought of him out at sea,

An' I felt I had been to blame; he was always kind to me. 90

'Wait a little, my lass, I am sure it'll all come right' —

An' the boat went down that night — the boat went down that night

RIZPAH

17—

I

WAILING, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and sea —

And Willy's voice in the wind, 'O mother, come out to me!'

Why should he call me to-night, when
he knows that I cannot go?
For the downs are as bright as day,
and the full moon stares at the
snow.

II

We should be seen, my dear; they
would spy us out of the town.
The loud black nights for us, and the
storm rushing over the down,
When I cannot see my own hand, but
am led by the creak of the chain,
And grovel and grope for my son till
I find myself drenched with the
rain.

III

Anything fallen again? nay—what
was there left to fall?
I have taken them home, I have num-
ber'd the bones, I have hidden
them all.
What am I saying? and what are
you? do you come as a spy?
Falls? what falls? who knows? As
the tree falls so must it lie.

IV

Who let her in? how long has she been?
you—what have you heard?
Why did you sit so quiet? you never
have spoken a word.
O—to pray with me—yes—a lady
—none of their spies—
But the night has crept into my heart,
and begun to darken my eyes.

V

Ah—you, that have lived so soft, what
should *you* know of the night,
The blast and the burning shame and
the bitter frost and the fright?
I have done it, while you were asleep
—you were only made for the
day.
I have gather'd my baby together—
and now you may go your way.

VI

Nay—for it's kind of you, madam,
to sit by an old dying wife.
But say nothing hard of my boy, I
have only an hour of life.
I kiss'd my boy in the prison, before
he went out to die.

'They dared me to do it,' he said, and
he never has told me a lie.
I whipt him for robbing an orchard
once when he was but a child—
'The farmer dared me to do it,' he
said; he was always so wild—
And idle—and could n't be idle—my
Willy—he never could rest.
The King should have made him a
soldier, he would have been
one of his best.

VII

But he lived with a lot of wild mates,
and they never would let him
be good;
They swore that he dare not rob the
mail, and he swore that he
would;
And he took no life, but he took
one purse, and when all was
done
He flung it among his fellows—'I'll
none of it,' said my son.

VIII

I came into court to the judge and the
lawyers. I told them my tale,
God's own truth—but they kill'd
him, they kill'd him for rob-
bing the mail.
They hang'd him in chains for a show
—we had always borne a good
name—
To be hang'd for a thief—and then
put away—isn't that enough
shame?
Dust to dust—low down—let us
hide! but they set him so high
That all the ships of the world could
stare at him, passing by.
God'll pardon the hell-black raven
and horrible fowls of the air,
But not the black heart of the lawyer
who kill'd him and hang'd him
there.

IX

And the jailer forced me away. I had
bid him my last good-bye;
They had fasten'd the door of his cell.
'O mother!' I heard him cry.
I could n't get back tho' I tried, he
had something further to say,
And now I never shall know it. The
jailer forced me away.

X

Then since I couldn't but hear that
cry of my boy that was dead,
They seized me and shut me up:
they fasten'd me down on my
bed.
'Mother, O mother!'—he call'd in the
dark to me year after year—
They beat me for that, they beat me
—you know that I couldn't
but hear;
And then at the last they found I had
grown so stupid and still
They let me abroad again—but the
creatures had worked their will.

XI

Flesh of my flesh was gone, but bone
of my bone was left—
I stole them all from the lawyers—and
you, will you call it a theft?—
My baby, the bones that had suck'd
me, the bones that had laughed
and had cried—
'Theirs? O, no! they are mine—not
theirs—they had moved in my
side.

XII

Do you think I was scared by the
bones? I kiss'd 'em, I buried
'em all—
I can't dig deep, I am old—in the
night by the churchyard wall.
My Willy 'ill rise up whole when the
trumpet of judgment 'ill sound,
But I charge you never to say that I
laid him in holy ground.

XIII

They would scratch him up—they
would hang him again on the
cursed tree.
Sin? O, yes, we are sinners, I know
—let all that be,
And read me a Bible verse of the
Lord's goodwill toward men—
'Full of compassion and mercy, the
Lord'—let me hear it again;
'Full of compassion and mercy—long-
suffering.' Yes, O, yes!
For the lawyer is born but to murder
—the Saviour lives but to bless.
He'll never put on the black cap
except for the worst of the
worst,

And the first may be last—I have
heard it in church—and the
last may be first.
Suffering—O, long-suffering—yes,
as the Lord must know,
Year after year in the mist and the
wind and the shower and the
snow.

XIV

Heard, have you? what? they have
told you he never repented his
sin.
How do they know it? are *they* his
mother? are *you* of his kin? 70
Heard! have you ever heard, when
the storm on the downs began,
The wind that 'ill wail like a child and
the sea that 'ill moan like a man?

XV

Election, Election, and Reprobation—
it's all very well.
But I go to-night to my boy, and I
shall not find him in hell.
For I cared so much for my boy that
the Lord has look'd into my
care,
And He means me I'm sure to be happy
with Willy, I know not where.

XVI

And if *he* be lost—but to save *my*
soul, that is all your desire—
Do you think that I care for *my* soul
if my boy be gone to the fire?
I have been with God in the dark—go,
go, you may leave me alone—
You never have borne a child—you
are just as hard as a stone. 80

XVII

Madam, I beg your pardon! I think
that you mean to be kind,
But I cannot hear what you say for
my Willy's voice in the wind—
The snow and the sky so bright—he
used but to call in the dark,
And he calls to me now from the
church and not from the gibbet
—for hark!
Nay—you can hear it yourself—it is
coming—shaking the walls—
Willy—the moon's in a cloud—
Good-night. I am going. He
calls.

THE NORTHERN COBBLER

I

WAAIT till our Sally cooms in, fur
 thou mun a' sights¹ to tell.
 Eh, but I be maäin glad to seeä tha
 sa 'arty an' well.
 Cast awaäy on a disolut land wi' a
 vartical soon²!'
 Strange fur to goä fur to think what
 saäilors a' seäan an' a' doon;
 'Summat to drink sa 'ot?' I 'a
 nowt but Adam's wine:
 What's the 'eät o' this little 'ill-side
 to the 'eät o' the line?

II

'What's i' tha bottle-a-stanning theer?'
 I'll tell tha. Gin.
 But if thou wants thy grog, tha mun
 goä fur it down to the inn.
 Naäy — fur I be maäin-glad, but thaw
 tha was iver sa dry,
 Thou gits naw gin fro' the bottle
 theer, an' I'll tell tha why. 10

III

Meä an' thy sister was married, when
 wur it? back-end o' June,
 Ten year sin', and wa 'greed as well
 as a fiddle i' tune.
 I could fettle and clump owd booöts
 and shoes wi' the best on 'em all,
 As fer as fro' Thursby thurn hup to
 Harmsby and Hutterby Hall.
 We was busy as bees i' the bloom an'
 as 'appy as 'art could think,
 An' then the babby wur burn, and
 then I taäkes to the drink.

IV

An' I weänt gaäinsally it, my lad, thaw
 I be hafe shaämed on it now,
 We could sing a good song at the
 Plow, we could sing a good
 song at the Plow;

¹ The vowels *ai*, pronounced separately though in the closest conjunction, best render the sound of the long *i* and *y* in this dialect. But since such words as *cratin'*, *daiin'*, *whai*, *ai* (I), etc., look awkward except in a page of express phonetics, I have thought it better to leave the simple *i* and *y*, and to trust that my readers will give them the broader pronunciation.

² The *oo* short, as in 'wood.'

Thaw once of a frosty night I slither'd
 an' hurted my huck,¹
 An' I coom'd neck-an-crop soomtimes
 slaäpe down i' the squad an' the
 muck:
 An' once I fowt wi' the taäilör — not
 hafe ov a man, my lad —
 Fur he scrawm'd an' scratted my faäce
 like a cat, an' it maäde'er sa mad
 That Sally she turn'd a tongue-
 banger,² an' raäted ma, 'Sottin'
 thy braäins
 Guzzlin' an' soäkin' an' smoäkin' an'
 hawmin'³ about i' the laänes,
 Soä sow-droonk that tha doesn not
 touch thy 'at to the Squire;
 An' I loöök'd cock-eyed at my noäse
 an' I seeä'd 'im a-gittin' o' fire;
 But sin' I wur hallus i' liquor an'
 hallus as droonk as a king,
 Foälsks' coostom flitted awaäy like a
 kite wi' a brokken string.

V

An' Sally she wesh'd foälsks' cloäths
 to keep the wolf fro' the door,
 Eh, but the moor she riled me, she
 druv me to drink the moor, 30
 Fur I fun', when 'er back wur turn'd,
 wheer Sally's owd stockin' wur
 'id,
 An' I grabb'd the munny she maäde,
 and I weär'd it o' liquor, I did.

VI

An' one night I cooms'oäim likē a bull
 gotten loose at a faäir,
 An' she wur a-waäitin' fo'mma, an'
 cryin' and teärin' 'er aäir,
 An' I tummled athurt the craädle an'
 sweär'd as I'd breäk ivry stick
 O' furnitur 'ere i' the 'ouse, an' I gied
 our Sally a kick,
 An' I mash'd the taäbles an' chairs,
 an' she an' the babby beäl'd,⁴
 Fur I knaw'd naw moor what I did
 nor a mortal beäst o' the feäld.

VII

An' when I waäked i' the murnin' I
 seeä'd that our Sally went laämed
 Cos' o' the kick as I gied'er, an' I wur
 dreädful ashaämed; 40

¹ Hip.

² Scold.

³ Lounging.

⁴ Bellowed, cried out.

An' Sally wur sloomy¹ an' draggle-
taill'd in an owd turn gown,
An' the babby's faäce wur'n't wesh'd,
an' the 'ole 'ouse hupside down.

VIII

An' then I minded our Sally sa pratty
an' neät an' sweet,
Straät as a pole an' cleän as a flower
fro' 'eädd to feeat;
An' then I minded the fust kiss I gied
'er by Thursby thurn;
Theer wur a lark a-singin' 'is best of
a Sunday at murn,
Could n't see 'im, we 'eärd 'im a-moun-
tin' oop 'igher an' 'igher,
An' then 'e turn'd to the sun, an' 'e
shined like a sparkle o' fire.
' Does n't tha see 'im ? ' she axcs, ' fur
I can see 'im ; ' an' I⁴⁹
Seeädd nobbut the smile o' the sun as
danced in 'er pratty blue eye ;
An' I says, ' I mun gie tha a kiss, ' an'
Sally says, ' Noä, thou moänt, '
But I gied 'er a kiss, an' then anoother,
an' Sally says, ' doänt ! '

IX

An' when we coom'd into meeätin', at
fust she wur all in a tew,
But, arter, we sing'd the 'ymn to-
gether like birds on a beugh ;
An' Muggins 'e preäch'd o' hell-fire an'
the loov o' God fur men,
An' then upo' coomin' awaäy Sally
gied me a kiss ov 'ersen.

X

Heer wur a fall fro' a kiss to a kick
like Saätan as fell
Down out o' heaven i' hell-fire — thaw
theer's naw drinkin' i' hell ;
Meä fur to kick our Sally as kep the
wolf fro' the door,
All along o' the drink, fur I loov'd 'er
as well as afoor. 60

XI

Sa like a graät num-cumpus I blub-
ber'd awaäy o' the bed —
' Weänt niver do it naw moor ; ' an'
Sally loookt up an' she said,
' I'll upowd it² tha weänt ; thou 'rt
like the rest o' the men, '

¹ Sluggish, out of spirits.

² I'll uphold it.

Thou'll goä sniffin' about the tap till
tha does it ageän.

Theer's thy hennemy, man, an' I
knaaws, as knaaws tha sa well,
That, if tha seeä's 'im an' smells 'im
tha 'll foller 'im slick into hell.'

XII

' Naäy, ' says I, ' fur I weänt goä snif-
fin' about the tap.'
' Weänt tha ? ' she says, an' mysen I
thowt i' mysen ' mayhap.'
' Noä : ' an' I started awaäy like a shot,
an' down to the hinn,
An' I browt what tha seeä's stannin'
theer, yon big black bottle o'
gin. 70

XIII

' That caps owt, ' ¹ says Sally, an' saw
she begins to cry,
But I puts it inter 'er 'ands an' I says
to 'er, ' Sally, ' says I,
' Stan' 'im theer i' the naäme o' the
Lord an' the power ov 'is graäce,
Stan' 'im theer, fur I'll loook my hen-
nemy straäit i' the faäce,
Stan' 'im theer i' the winder, an' let
ma loook at 'im then,
' E seeäms naw moor nor watter, an'
' e's the divil's oäen sen.'

XIV

An' I wur down i' tha mouth, could n't
do naw work an' all,
Nasty an' snaggy an' shaäky, an'
poonch'd my 'and wi' the hawl,
But she wur a power o' coomfut, an'
sattled 'ersen o' my knee,
An' coäxd an' coodled me oop till ageän
I feel'd mysen free. 80

XV

An' Sally she tell'd it about, an' foälk
stood a-gawmin' ² in,
As thaw it wur summat bewitch'd
istead of a quart o' gin ;
An' some on 'em said it wur watter —
an' I wur chousin' the wife,
Fur I could n't 'owd 'ands off gin, wur
it nobbut to sääve my life ;
An' blacksmith 'e strips me the thick
ov is airm, an' 'e shaws it to
me,

¹ That's beyond everything.

² Staring vacantly.

'Fetäl thou this! thou can't graw this
 upo' watter! ' says he.
 An' Doctor 'e calls o' Sunday an' just
 as candles was lit,
 'Thou moänt do it,' he says, 'tha mun
 break 'im off bit by bit.'
 'Thou'rt but a Methody-man,' says
 Parson, and laäys down 'is 'at,
 An' 'e points to the bottle o' gin, 'but
 I respecks tha fur that;' ⁹⁰
 An' Squire, his oän very sen, walks
 down fro' the 'All to see,
 An' 'e spansks 'is 'and into mine, 'fur
 I respecks tha,' says 'e;
 An' coostom ageän draw'd in like a
 wind fro' far an' wide,
 And browt me the booöts to be cob-
 bled fro' hafe the coontryside.

XVI

An' theer 'e stans an' theer 'e shall
 stan' to my dying daäy;
 I'a gotten to loov 'im ageän in anoother
 kind of a waäy,
 Proud on 'im, like, my lad, an' I
 keeäps 'im cleän an' bright,
 Loovs 'im, an' roobs 'im, an' doosts
 'im, an' puts 'im back i' the
 light.

XVII

Would n't a pint a' sarved as well as a
 quart? Naw doubt;
 But I liked a bigger feller to fight wi'
 an' fowt it out. ¹⁰⁰
 Fine an' meller 'e mun be by this, if I
 cared to taäste,
 But I moänt, my lad, and I weänt, fur
 I'd feäl mysen cleän dis-
 graäced.

XVIII

An' once I said to the Missis, 'My lass,
 when I cooms to die,
 Smash the bottle to smithers, the
 devil's in 'im,' said I.
 But arter I chaänged my mind, an' if
 Sally be left aloän,
 I'll hev 'im a-buried wi'mma an'
 taäke 'im afoor the Throän.

XIX

Coom thou 'eer — yon laädy a-steppin'
 along the streetät,
 Does n't tha knaw 'er — sa pratty, an'
 feät, an' neät, an' sweetät?

Look at the cloäths on 'er back, thebbe
 ammost spic-span-new,
 An' Tommy's faäce be as fresh as a
 codlin wesh'd i' the dew. ¹¹⁰

XX

'Ere be our Sally an' Tommy, an' we
 be a-goin to dine,
 Baäcon an' taätes, an' a beslings-pud-
 din' ¹ an' Adam's wine;
 But if tha wants ony grog tha mun
 goä fur it down to the Hinn,
 Fur I weänt shed a drop on 'is
 blood, noä, not fur Sally's oän
 kin.

THE REVENGE

A BALLAD OF THE FLEET

I

At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard
 Grenville lay,
 And a pinnace, like a flutter'd bird,
 came flying from far away:
 'Spanish ships of war at sea! we have
 sighted fifty-three!'
 Then sware Lord Thomas Howard:
 'Fore God I am no coward;
 But I cannot meet them here, for my
 ships are out of gear,
 And the half my men are sick. I must
 fly, but follow quick.
 We are six ships of the line; can we
 fight with fifty-three?'

II

Then spake Sir Richard Grenville: 'I
 know you are no coward;
 You fly them for a moment to fight
 with them again.
 But I've ninety men and more that
 are lying sick ashore. ¹⁰
 I should count myself the coward if I
 left them, my Lord Howard,
 To these Inquisition dogs and the
 devildoms of Spain.'

III

So Lord Howard past away with five
 ships of war that day,
 Till he melted like a cloud in the silent
 summer heaven;

¹ A pudding made with the first milk of
 the cow after calving.

But Sir Richard bore in hand all his
sick men from the land
Very carefully and slow,
Men of Bideford in Devon,
And we laid them on the ballast down
below ;
For we brought them all aboard,
And they blest him in their pain, that
they were not left to Spain, ²⁰
To the thumb-screw and the stake, for
the glory of the Lord.

IV

He had only a hundred seamen to
work the ship and to fight,
And he sailed away from Flores till
the Spaniard came in sight,
With his huge sea-castles heaving
upon the weather bow.
' Shall we fight or shall we fly ?
Good Sir Richard, tell us now,
For to fight is but to die !
There 'll be little of us left by the time
this sun be set.'
And Sir Richard said again : ' We be
all good English men.
Let us bang these dogs of Seville, the
children of the devil, ³⁰
For I never turn'd my back upon Don
or devil yet.'

V

Sir Richard spoke and he laugh'd, and
we roar'd a hurrah, and so
The little Revenge ran on sheer into
the heart of the foe,
With her hundred fighters on deck,
and her ninety sick below ;
For half of their fleet to the right and
half to the left were seen,
And the little Revenge ran on thro'
the long sea-lane between.

VI

Thousands of their soldiers look'd
down from their decks and
laugh'd,
Thousands of their seamen made mock
at the mad little craft
Running on and on, till delay'd
By their mountain-like San Philip
that, of fifteen hundred tons, ⁴⁰
And up-shadowing high above us with
her yawning tiers of guns,
Took the breath from our sails, and
we stay'd.

VII

And while now the great San Philip
hung above us like a cloud
Whence the thunderbolt will fall
Long and loud,
Four galleons drew away
From the Spanish fleet that day,
And two upon the larboard and two
upon the starboard lay,
And the battle-thunder broke from
them all.

VIII

But anon the great San Philip, she
bethought herself and went, ⁵⁰
Having that within her womb that
had left her ill content ;
And the rest they came aboard us, and
they fought us hand to hand,
For a dozen times they came with
their pikes and musqueteers,
And a dozen times we shook 'em off
as a dog that shakes his ears
When he leaps from the water to the
land.

IX

And the sun went down, and the stars
came out far over the summer
sea,
But never a moment ceased the fight
of the one and the fifty-three.
Ship after ship, the whole night long,
their high-built galleons came,
Ship after ship, the whole night long,
with her battle-thunder and
flame ;
Ship after ship, the whole night long,
drew back with her dead and
her shame. ⁶⁰
For some were sunk and many were
shatter'd, and so could fight us
no more —
God of battles, was ever a battle like
this in the world before ?

X

For he said, ' Fight on ! fight on !'
Tho' his vessel was all but a wreck ;
And it chanced that, when half of
the short summer night was
gone,
With a grisly wound to be drest he
had left the deck,
But a bullet struck him that was
dressing it suddenly dead,

And himself he was wounded again in
the side and the head,
And he said, 'Fight on! fight on!'

XI

And the night went down, and the sun
smiled out far over the summer
sea,

And the Spanish fleet with broken
sides lay round us all in a ring;
But they dared not touch us again, for
they fear'd that we still could
sting,

So they watch'd what the end would
be.

And we had not fought them in vain,
But in perilous plight were we,
Seeing forty of our poor hundred were
slain,

And half of the rest of us maim'd for
life

In the crash of the cannonades and the
desperate strife;

And the sick men down in the hold
were most of them stark and
cold,

And the pikes were all broken or bent,
and the powder was all of it
spent;

And the masts and the rigging were
lying over the side;

But Sir Richard cried in his English
pride

'We have fought such a fight for a
day and a night

As may never be fought again!

We have won great glory, my men!

And a day less or more

At sea or ashore,

We die—does it matter when?

Sink me the ship, Master Gunner—
sink her, split her in twain!

Fall into the hands of God, not into
the hands of Spain!

XII

And the gunner said, 'Ay, ay,' but
the seamen made reply:

'We have children, we have wives,

And the Lord hath spared our lives.

We will make the Spaniard promise,
if we yield, to let us go;

We shall live to fight again and to
strike another blow.'

And the lion there lay dying, and
they yielded to the foe.

XIII

And the stately Spanish men to their
flagship bore him then,

Where they laid him by the mast, old

Sir Richard caught at last,

And they praised him to his face with
their courtly foreign grace;

But he rose upon their decks, and he
cried:

'I have fought for Queen and Faith
like a valiant man and true;

I have only done my duty as a man is
bound to do.

With a joyful spirit I Sir Richard
Grenville die!'

And he fell upon their decks, and he
died.

XIV

And they stared at the dead that had
been so valiant and true,

And had holden the power and glory
of Spain so cheap

That he dared her with one little ship
and his English few;

Was he devil or man? He was devil
for aught they knew,

But they sank his body with honor
down into the deep,

And they mann'd the Revenge with a
swarthier alien crew,

And away she sail'd with her loss and
long'd for her own;

When a wind from the lands they had
ruin'd awoke from sleep,

And the water began to heave and
the weather to moan,

And or ever that evening ended a
great gale blew,

And a wave like the wave that is
raised by an earthquake grew,

Till it smote on their hulls and their
sails and their masts and their
flags,

And the whole sea plunged and fell on
the shot-shatter'd navy of Spain,

And the little Revenge herself went
down by the island crags

To be lost evermore in the main.

THE SISTERS

THEY have left the doors ajar; and
by their clash,

And prelude on the keys, I know the
song,

Their favorite — which I call 'The
Tables Turn'd.'
Evelyn begins it, 'O diviner Air.'

EVELYN

O diviner Air,
Thro' the heat, the drowth, the dust, the
glare,
Far from out the west in shadowing
showers,
Over all the meadow baked and bare,
Making fresh and fair
All the bowers and the flowers, 10
Fainting flowers, faded bowers,
Over all this weary world of ours,
Breathe, diviner Air!

A sweet voice that — you scarce could
better that!
Now follows Edith echoing Evelyn.

EDITH

O diviner light,
Thro' the cloud that roofs our noon with
night,
Thro' the blotting mist, the blinding
showers,
Far from out a sky for ever bright, 19
Over all the woodland's flooded bowers,
Over all the meadow's drowning flowers,
Over all this ruin'd world of ours,
Break, diviner light!

Marvellously like, their voices — and
themselves!
Tho' one is somewhat deeper than the
other,
As one is somewhat graver than the
other —
Edith than Evelyn. Your good uncle,
whom
You count the father of your fortune,
longs
For this alliance. Let me ask you then,
Which voice most takes you? for I do
not doubt, 30
Being a watchful parent, you are taken
With one or other; tho' sometimes I
fear
You may be flickering, fluttering in a
doubt
Between the two — which must not
be — which might
Be death to one. They both are beau-
tiful;
Evelyn is gayer, wittier, prettier, says
The common voice, if one may trust
it, she?

No! but the paler and the graver,
Edith.

Woo her and gain her then; no waver-
ing, boy!

The graver is perhaps the one for you
Who jest and laugh so easily and so
well.

For love will go by contrast, as by
likes. 41

No sisters ever prized each other
more.

Not so; their mother and her sister
loved

More passionately still.

But that my best
And oldest friend, your uncle, wishes
it,

And that I know you worthy every
way

To be my son, I might, perchance, be
loath

To part them, or part from them; and
yet one

Should marry, or all the broad lands
in your view 50

From this bay-window — which our
house has held

Three hundred years — will pass col-
laterally.

My father with a child on either
knee,

A hand upon the head of either child,
Smoothing their locks, as golden as
his own

Were silver, 'get them wedded' would
he say.

And once my prattling Edith ask'd
him 'why?'

'Ay, why?' said he, 'for why should
I go lame?'

Then told them of his wars, and of
his wound.

For see — this wine — the grape from
whence it flow'd 60

Was blackening on the slopes of Por-
tugal,

When that brave soldier, down the
terrible ridge

Plunged in the last fierce charge at
Waterloo,

And caught the laming bullet. He
left me this,

Which yet retains a memory of its
youth,

As I of mine, and my first passion.
Come!
Here's to your happy union with my
child!

Yet must you change your name—
no fault of mine!
You say that you can do it as willingly
As birds make ready for their bridal-
time⁷⁰
By change of feather; for all that,
my boy,
Some birds are sick and sullen when
they moult.
An old and worthy name! but mine
that stirr'd
Among our civil wars and earlier too
Among the Roses, the more venerable.
I care not for a name—no fault of
mine.
Once more—a happier marriage than
my own!

You see yon Lombard poplar on
the plain.
The highway running by it leaves a
breadth
Of sward to left and right, where,
long ago,⁸⁰
One bright May morning in a world
of song,
I lay at leisure, watching overhead
The aerial poplar wave, an amber
spire.

I dozed; I woke. An open landaulet
Whirl'd by, which, after it had past
me, show'd
Turning my way, the loveliest face
on earth.
The face of one there sitting oppo-
site,
On whom I brought a strange unhap-
piness,
That time I did not see.

Love at first sight
May seem—with goodly rhyme and
reason for it—⁹⁰
Possible—at first glimpse, and for a
face
Gone in a moment—strange. Yet
once, when first
I came on lake Llanberris in the dark,
A moonless night with storm—one
lightning-fork

Flash'd out the lake; and tho' I lol-
ter'd there
The full day after, yet in retrospect
That less than momentary thunder-
sketch
Of lake and mountain conquers all the
day.

The sun himself has limn'd the face
for me.
Not quite so quickly, no, nor half as
well.¹⁰⁰
For look you here—the shadows are
too deep,
And like the critic's blurring comment
make
The veriest beauties of the work ap-
pear
The darkest faults; the sweet eyes
frown, the lips
Seem but a gash. My sole memorial
Of Edith—no, the other,—both in-
deed.

So that bright face was flash'd thro'
sense and soul
And by the poplar vanish'd—to be
found
Long after, as it seem'd, beneath the
tall
Tree-bowers, and those long-sweeping
beechen boughs¹¹⁰
Of our New Forest. I was there
alone.
The phantom of the whirling landaulet
For ever past me by; when one quick
peal
Of laughter drew me thro' the glim-
mering glades
Down to the snowlike sparkle of a
cloth
On fern and foxglove. Lo, the face
again,
My Rosalind in this Arden—Edith—
all
One bloom of youth, health, beauty,
happiness,
And moved to merriment at a passing
jest.

There one of those about her know-
ing me¹²⁰
Call'd me to join them; so with these
I spent
What seem'd my crowning hour, my
day of days.

I woo'd her then, nor unsuccessfully.
The worse for her, for me! Was I
content?

Ay — no, not quite; for now and then
I thought

Laziness, vague love-longings, the
bright May,

Had made a heated haze to magnify
The charm of Edith — that a man's
ideal

Is high in heaven, and lodged with
Plato's God,

Not findable here — content, and not
content, ¹³⁰

In some such fashion as a man may be
That having had the portrait of his
friend

Drawn by an artist, looks at it, and
says,

'Good! very like! not altogether he.'

As yet I had not bound myself by
words,

Only, believing I loved Edith, made
Edith love *me*. Then came the day
when I,

Flattering myself that all my doubts
were fools

Born of the fool this Age that doubts
of all —

Not I that day of Edith's love or
mine — ¹⁴⁰

Had braced my purpose to declare
myself.

I stood upon the stairs of Paradise.

The golden gates would open at a
word.

I spoke it — told her of my passion,
seen

And lost and found again, had got so
far,

Had caught her hand, her eyelids fell
— I heard

Wheels, and a noise of welcome at the
doors —

On a sudden after two Italian years
Had set the blossom of her health
again,

The younger sister, Evelyn, enter'd —
there, ¹⁵⁰

There was the face, and altogether she.
The mother fell about the daughter's
neck,

The sisters closed in one another's arms,
Their people throng'd about them from
the hall,

And in the thick of question and
reply

I fled the house, driven by one angel
face,

And all the Furies.

I was bound to her;
I could not free myself in honor —
bound

Not by the sounded letter of the word,
But counter-pressures of the yielded
hand ¹⁶⁰

That timorously and faintly echoed
mine,

Quick blushes, the sweet dwelling of
her eyes

Upon me when she thought I did not
see —

Were these not bonds? nay, nay, but
could I wed her

Loving the other? do her that great
wrong?

Had I not dream'd I loved her yester-
morn?

Had I not known where Love, at first
a fear,

Grew after marriage to full height and
form?

Yet after marriage, that mock-sister
there —

Brother-in-law — the fiery nearness of
it — ¹⁷⁰

Unlawful and disloyal brotherhood —
What end but darkness could ensue

from this

For all the three? So Love and Honor
jarr'd,

Tho' Love and Honor join'd to raise
the full

High-tide of doubt that sway'd me up
and down

Advancing nor retreating.

Edith wrote:
'My mother bids me ask' — I did not
tell you —

A widow with less guile than many a
child.

God help the wrinkled children that
are Christ's

As well as the plump cheek — she
wrought us harm, ¹⁸⁰

Poor soul, not knowing! — 'Are you
ill?' — so ran

The letter — 'you have not been here
of late.

You will not find me here. At last I
 go
 On that long-promised visit to the
 North.
 I told your wayside story to my mother
 And Evelyn. She remembers you.
 Farewell.
 Pray come and see my mother. Almost
 blind
 With ever-growing cataract, yet she
 thinks
 She sees you when she hears. Again
 farewell.'

Cold words from one I had hoped to
 warm so far
 That I could stamp my image on her
 heart!
 'Pray come and see my mother, and
 farewell.'
 Cold, but as welcome as free airs of
 heaven
 After a dungeon's closeness. Selfish,
 strange!
 What dwarfs are men! my strangled
 vanity
 Utter'd a stifled cry — to have vexed
 myself
 And all in vain for her — cold heart or
 none —
 No bride for me. Yet so my path was
 clear
 To win the sister.

Whom I woo'd and won.
 For Evelyn knew not of my former
 suit,
 Because the simple mother work'd
 upon
 By Edith pray'd me not to whisper of
 it.
 And Edith would be bridesmaid on
 the day.
 But on that day, not being all at
 ease,
 I from the altar glancing back upon
 her,
 Before the first 'I will' was utter'd,
 saw
 The bridesmaid pale, statue-like, pas-
 sionless —
 'No harm, no harm' — I turn'd again,
 and placed
 My ring upon the finger of my bride.

So, when we parted, Edith spoke no
 word,

She wept no tear, but round my Eve-
 lyn clung
 In utter silence for so long. I thought,
 'What, will she never set her sister
 free?'

We left her, happy each in each,
 and then,
 As tho' the happiness of each in each
 Were not enough, must fain have tor-
 rents, lakes,
 Hills, the great things of Nature and
 the fair,
 To lift us as it were from common-
 place,
 And help us to our joy. Better have
 sent
 Our Edith thro' the glories of the earth,
 To change with her horizon, if true
 Love
 Were not his own imperial all-in-all.

Far off we went. My God, I would
 not live
 Save that I think this gross hard-
 seeming world
 Is our misshaping vision of the Powers
 Behind the world, that make our griefs
 our gains.

For on the dark night of our mar-
 riage-day
 The great tragedian, that had quench'd
 herself
 In that assumption of the bridesmaid
 — she
 That loved me — our true Edith — her
 brain broke
 With over-acting, till she rose and
 fled
 Beneath a pitiless rush of autumn rain
 To the deaf church — to be let in — to
 pray
 Before *that* altar — so I think; and
 there
 They found her beating the hard Pro-
 testant doors.
 She died and she was buried ere we
 knew.

I learnt it first. I had to speak.
 At once
 The bright quick smile of Evelyn,
 that had sunn'd
 The morning of our marriage, past
 away.

And on our home-return the daily
 want²⁴⁰
 Of Edith in the house, the garden,
 still
 Haunted us like her ghost; and by
 and by,
 Either from that necessity for talk
 Which lives with blindness, or plain
 innocence
 Of nature, or desire that her lost
 child
 Should earn from both the praise of
 heroism,
 The mother broke her promise to the
 dead,
 And told the living daughter with
 what love
 Edith had welcomed my brief wooing
 of her,

And all her sweet self-sacrifice and
 death.²⁵⁰

Henceforth that mystic bond be-
 twixt the twins —
 Did I not tell you they were twins? —
 prevail'd
 So far that no caress could win my
 wife
 Back to that passionate answer of full
 heart
 I had from her at first. Not that her
 love,
 Tho' scarce as great as Edith's power
 of love,
 Had lessen'd, but the mother's garru-
 lous wall
 For ever woke the unhappy Past
 again,



‘We left her, happy each in each.’

Till that dead bridesmaid, meant to be
my bride,
Put forth cold hands between us, and
I fear'd ²⁶⁰

The very fountains of her life were
chill'd ;

So took her thence, and brought her
here, and here

She bore a child, whom reverently we
call'd

Edith ; and in the second year was
born

A second — this I named from her
own self,

Evelyn ; then two weeks — no more
— she join'd,

In and beyond the grave, that one she
loved.

Now in this quiet of declining life,
Thro' dreams by night and trances of
the day,

The sisters glide about me hand in
hand, ²⁷⁰

Both beautiful alike, nor can I tell
One from the other, no, nor care to
tell

One from the other, only know they
come,

They smile upon me, till, remembering
all

The love they both have borne me,
and the love

I bore them both — divided as I am
From either by the stillness of the
grave —

I know not which of these I love the
best.

But *you* love Edith ; and her own
true eyes

Are traitors to her ; our quick Eve-
lyn — ²⁸⁰

The merrier, prettier, wittier, as they
talk,

And not without good reason, my
good son —

Is yet untouch'd. And I that hold
them both

Dearest of all things — well, I am not
sure —

But if there lie a preference either
way,

And in the rich vocabulary of Love
'Most dearest' be a true superlative —

I think *I* likewise love your Edith
most.

THE VILLAGE WIFE ; OR, THE ENTAIL¹

I

'OUSE-KEEPER sent tha, my lass, fur
new Squire coom'd last night.

Butter an' heggs — yis — yis. I'll goß
wi' tha back ; all right ;

Butter I warrants be prime, an' I war-
rants the heggs be as well,

Hafe a pint o' milk runs out when ya
breaks the shell.

II

Sit thysen down fur a bit ; hev a glass
o' cowslip wine !

I liked the owd Squire an' 'is gells as
thaw they was gells o' mine,

Fur then we was all es one, the Squire
an' 'is darters an' me,

Hall but Miss Annie, the heldest, I
niver not took to she.

But Nelly, the last of the cletch,² I
liked 'er the fust on 'em all,

Fur hoffsens we talkt o' my darter es
died o' the fever at fall ; ¹⁰

An' I thowt 't wur the will o' the Lord,
but Miss Annie she said it wur
draäins,

Fur she hed n't naw coomfut in 'er,
an' arn'd naw thanks fur 'er
paäins.

Eh ! thebbe all wi' the Lord, my chil-
der, I han't gotten none !

Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is taäil in
'is 'and, an' owd Squire's gone.

III

Fur 'staäte be i' taäil, my lass — tha
dosn' know what that be ?

But I knows the law, I does, for the
lawyer ha tow'd it to me.

'When theer's naw 'eäd to a 'Ouse by
the fault o' that ere maäle —

The gells they counts fur nowt, and
the next un he taäkes the taäil.'

IV

What be the next un like ? can tha
tell ony harm on 'im, lass ? —

Naäy sit down — naw 'urry — sa
cowd ! — hev another glass ! ²⁰

Straänge an' cowd fur the time ! we
may happen a fall o' snaw —

¹ See note on pronunciation, p. 582.

² A brood of chickens.

Not es I cares fur to hear ony harm,
but I likes to know.

An' I oäps es 'e beänt booöklarn'd; but
'e dosn' not coom fro' the shere;
We'd anew o' that wi' the Squire, an'
we haätes booöklarnin' ere.

V

Fur Squire wur a Varsity scholar, an
niver lookt arter the land —
Whoäts or turmuts or taätes — 'e'd
hallus a booök i' 'is 'and,
Hallus aloän wi' 'is booöks, thaw nigh
upo' seventy year.
An' booöks, what's booöks? thou
knavs thebbe neyther 'ere nor
theer.

VI

An' the gells, they hed n't naw taäils,
an' the lawyer he tow'd it me
That 'is taäil were soä tied up es he
could n't cut down a tree! 30
'Drat the trees,' says I, to be sewer I
haätes 'em, my lass,
Fur we puts the muck o' the land, an'
they sucks the muck fro' the
grass.

VII

An' Squire wur hallus a-smilin', an'
gied to the tramps goin' by —
An' all o' the wust i' the parish — wi'
hoffsens a drop in 'is eye.
An' ivry darter o' Squire's hed her
awn ridin-erse to 'ersen,
An' they rampaged about wi' their
grooms, an' wus 'untin' arter
the men,
An' hallus a-dallack¹ an' dizen'd out,
an' a-buyn' new cloäthes,
While 'e sit like a greät glimmer-
gowk² wi' 'is glasses athurt 'is
noäse,
An' 'is noäse sa grufted wi' snuff as it
could n't be scroob'd awaäy,
Fur 'atween 'is readin' an' writin' 'e
sniff't up a box in a daäy, 40
An' 'e niver runn'd arter the fox, nor
arter the birds wi' 'is gun,
An' 'e niver not shot one 'are, but 'e
leäved it to Charlie 'is son,
An' 'e niver not fish'd 'is awn ponds,
but Charlie 'e cotch'd the pike,

¹ Overdressed in gay colors.

² Owl.

Fur 'e warn't not burn to the land, an'
'e did n't take kind to it like;

But I äirs es 'e'd gie fur a howry¹
owd book thutty pound an'
moor,

An' 'e'd wrote an' owd book, his awn
sen, sa I knaw'd es 'e'd coom
to be poor;

An' 'e gied — I be fear'd fur to tell tha
'ow much — fur an owd scratted
stoän,

An' 'e digg'd up a loomp i' the land
an' 'e got a brown pot an' a
boäln,

An' 'e bowt owd money, es would n't
goä, wi' good gowd o' the
Queen,

An' 'e bowt little statutes all-naäkt
an' which was a shaäme to be
seen,

But 'e niver looökt ower a bill, nor 'e
niver not seed to owt, 51

An' 'e niver knaw'd nowt but booöks,
an' booöks, as thou knaws, beänt
nowt.

VIII

But owd Squire's laädy es long es she
lived she kep' 'em all clear,

Thaw es long es she lived I niver hed
none of 'er darters 'ere;

But arter she died we was all es one,
the childer an' me,

An' sarvints runn'd in an' out, an'
offsens we hed 'em to tea.

Lawk! 'ow I laugh'd when the lasses
'ud talk o' their Missis's waäys,

An' the Missis's talk'd o' the lasses. —
I'll tell tha some o' these daäys.

Hoänly Miss Annie were saw stuck
oop, like 'er mother afoor —

'Er an' 'er blessed darter — they niver
derken'd my door. 60

IX

An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled till
'e'd gotten a fright at last,

An' 'e calls fur 'is son, fur the 'turney's
letters they foller'd sa fast;

But Squire wur afear'd o' 'is son, an'
'e says to 'im, meek as a mouse,

'Lad, thou mun cut off thy taäil, or
the gells 'ull goä to the 'Ouse,

Fur I finds es I be that i' debt, es I
'oäps es thou 'il 'elp me a bit,

¹ Filthy.

An' if thou 'll 'gree to cut off thy taäl
I may saäve mysen yit.'

X

But Charlie 'e sets back 'is ears, an' 'e
sweärs, an' 'e says to 'im, 'Noä.
I've gotten the 'staäte by the taäl an'
be dang'd if I iver let goä!
Coom! coom! feyther, 'e says, 'why
should n't thy booöks be sowd!
I hears es soom o' thy booöks mebbe
worth their weight i' gowd.' 70

XI

Heäps an' heäps o' booöks, I ha' seed
'em, belong'd to the Squire,
But the lasses 'ed teärd out leäves i'
the middle to kindle the fire;
Sa moäst on 'is owd big booöks fetch'd
nigh to nowt at the saäle,
And Squire were at Charlie ageän to
git 'im to cut off 'is taäl.

XII

Ya would n't find Charlie's likes—'e
were that outdacious at 'oäm,
Not thaw ya went fur to raäke out
hell wi' a small-tooth coämb—
Droönk wi' the Quoloty's wine, an'
droonk wi' the farmer's säle,
Mad wi' the lasses an' all—an' 'e
would n't cut off the taäl.

XIII

Thou's coom'd oop by the beck; and
a thurn be a-grawin' theer,
I niver ha seed it sa white wi' the
maäy es I seed it to-year— 80
Theerbouts Charlie joomp't—and it
gied me a scare tother night,
Fur I thowt it wur Charlie's ghoäst i'
the derk, fur it looökt sa white.
'Billy,' says 'e, 'hev a joomp!—thaw
the banks o' the beck be sa high,
Fur he ca'd 'is 'erse Billy-rough-un,
thaw niver a hair wur awry;
But Billy fell bakkuds o' Charlie, an'
Charlie 'e brok 'is neck,
Sa theer wur a hend o' the taäl, fur
'e lost 'is taäl i' the beck.

XIV

Sa 'is taäl wur lost an' 'is booöks wur
gone an' 'is boy wur deäd,
An' Squire 'e smiled an' 'e smiled, but
'e niver not lift oop 'is 'eä.

Hallus a soft un, Squire! an' 'e smiled,
fur 'e hed n't naw friend,
Sa feyther an' son was buried together,
an' this wur the hend. 90

XV

An' Parson as hes n't the call, nor the
mooney, but hes the pride,
'E reäds of a sewer an' sartan 'oäp o'
the tother side;
But I beänt that sewer es the Lord, how-
siver they praäy'd an' praäy'd,
Lets them inter 'eaven eäsy es leäves
their debts to be paäid.
Siver the mou'ds rattled down upo'
poor owd Squire i' the wood,
An' I cried along wi' the gells, fur
they weänt niver coom to naw
good.

XVI

Fur Molly the long un she walkt
awaäy wi' a hoffer lad,
An' nawbody 'eärd on 'er sin', sa o'
coorse she be gone to the bad!
An' Lucy wur laäme o' one leg, sweet-
'arts she niver 'ed none—
Straänge an' unheppen¹ Miss Lucy!
we naämed her 'Dot an' gaw
one! 100
An' Hetty wur weak i' the hattics,
wi'out ony harm i' the legs,
An' the fever 'ed baäked Jinny's 'eä
as bald as one o' them heggs,
An' Nelly wur up fro' the craädle as
big i' the mouth as a cow,
An' saw she mun hammergrate,² lass,
or she weänt git a maäte ony-
how!
An' es for Miss Annie es call'd me
afoor my awn foäls to my
faäce,
'A hignorant village wife es 'ud hev
to be larn'd her awn plaäce,'
Hes fur Miss Hannie the heldest hes
now be a-grawin' sa howd,
I knaws that mooch o' sheä, es it beänt
not fit to be towd!

XVII

Sa I did n't not taäke it kindly ov owd
Miss Annie to saäy
Es I should be talkin' ageän 'em, es
soon es they went awaäy, 110

¹ Ungainly, awkward.

² Emigrate.

Fur lawks! 'ow I cried when they went, an' our Nelly she gied me 'er 'and,
 Fur I'd ha done owt for the Squire an' 'is gells es belong'd to the land;
 Booöks, es I said afoor, thebbe neyther 'ere nor theer!
 But I sarved 'em wi' butter an' heggs for huppuds o' twenty year.

XVIII

An' they hallus päid what I hax'd, sa I hallus deal'd wi' the Hall,
 An' they knaw'd what butter wur, an' they knaw'd what a hegg wur an' all;
 Hugger-mugger they lived, but they was n't that eäsy to pleäse,
 Till I gied 'em Hinjian curn, an' they laäid big heggs es tha secäs;
 An' I niver puts sääme¹ i' *my* butter — they does it at Willis's farm;
 Täaste another drop o' the wine — tweänt do tha naw harm. 120

XIX

Sa new Squire's coom'd wi' 'is tääl in 'is 'and, an' owd Squire's gone;
 I heard 'im a roomlin' by, but arter my night-cap wur on;
 Sa I han't clapt eyes on 'im yit, fur he coom'd last night sa lääte — Pluksh!!!² the hens i' the peäs! why did n't tha hesp the gaäte?

IN THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

EMMIE

I

OUR doctor had call'd in another, I never had seen him before,
 But he sent a chill to my heart when I saw him come in at the door,
 Fresh from the surgery-schools of France and of other lands —
 Harsh red hair, big voice, big chest, big merciless hands!
 Wonderful cures he had done, O, yes, but they said too of him
 He was happier using the knife than in trying to save the limb,

¹ Lord.² A cry accompanied by a clapping of hands to scare trespassing fowl.

And that I can well believe, for he look'd so coarse and so red,
 I could think he was one of those who would break their jests on the dead,
 And mangle the living dog that had loved him and fawn'd at his knee —
 Drench'd with the hellish oorali — that ever such things should be! 10

II

Here was a boy — I am sure that some of our children would die
 But for the voice of love, and the smile, and the comforting eye —
 Here was a boy in the ward, every bone seem'd out of its place —
 Caught in a mill and crush'd — it was all but a hopeless case:
 And he handled him gently enough; but his voice and his face were not kind,
 And it was but a hopeless case, he had seen it and made up his mind,
 And he said to me roughly, 'The lad will need little more of your care.'
 'All the more need,' I told him, 'to seek the Lord Jesus in prayer;
 They are all His children here, and I pray for them all as my own.'
 But he turn'd to me, 'Ay, good woman, can prayer set a broken bone?' 20
 Then he mutter'd half to himself, but I know that I heard him say,
 'All very well — but the good Lord Jesus has had his day.'

III

Had? has it come? It has only dawn'd. It will come by and by.
 O, how could I serve in the wards if the hope of the world were a lie?
 How could I bear with the sights and the loathsome smells of disease
 But that He said, 'Ye do it to me, when ye do it to these'?

IV

So he went. And we past to this ward where the younger children are laid.

Here is the cot of our orphan, our
darling, our meek little maid ;
Empty, you see, just now ! We have
lost her who loved her so much—
Patient of pain tho' as quick as a sen-
sitive plant to the touch. 30
Hers was the prettiest prattle, it often
moved me to tears,
Hers was the gratefullest heart I have
found in a child of her years—
Nay you remember our Emmie ; you
used to send her the flowers.
How she would smile at 'em, play
with 'em, talk to 'em hours after
hours !
They that can wander at will where the
works of the Lord are reveal'd
Little guess what joy can be got from
a cowslip out of the field ;
Flowers to these 'spirits in prison' are
all they can know of the spring,
They freshen and sweeten the wards
like the waft of an angel's wing.
And she lay with a flower in one hand
and her thin hands crost on her
breast—
Wan, but as pretty as heart can de-
sire, and we thought her at rest,
Quietly sleeping—so quiet, our doc-
tor said, 'Poor little dear, 41
Nurse, I must do it to-morrow ; she'll
never live thro' it, I fear.'

V

I walk'd with our kindly old doctor as
far as the head of the stair,
Then I return'd to the ward ; the child
didn't see I was there.

VI

Never since I was nurse had I been so
grieved and so vex't !
Emmie had heard him. Softly she
call'd from her cot to the next,
'He says I shall never live thro' it ;
O Annie, what shall I do ?'
Annie consider'd. 'If I,' said the
wise little Annie, 'was you,
I should cry to the dear Lord Jesus to
help me, for, Emmie, you see,
It's all in the picture there : "Little
children should come to me"'—
Meaning the print that you gave us, I
find that it always can please 51
Our children, the dear Lord Jesus with
children about his knees.

'Yes, and I will,' said Emmie, 'but
then if I call to the Lord,
How should he know that it's me ?
such a lot of beds in the ward !'
That was a puzzle for Annie. Again
she consider'd and said :
'Emmie, you put out your arms, and
you leave 'em outside on the
bed—
The Lord has so much to see to ! but,
Emmie, you tell it him plain,
It's the little girl with her arms lying
out on the counterpane.'

VII

I had sat three nights by the child—
I could not watch her for four—
My brain had begun to reel—I felt I
could do it no more. 60
That was my sleeping-night, but I
thought that it never would
pass.
There was a thunderclap once, and a
clatter of hail on the glass,
And there was a phantom cry that I
heard as I tost about,
The motherless bleat of a lamb in the
storm and the darkness without ;
My sleep was broken besides with
dreams of the dreadful knife
And fears for our delicate Emmie who
scarce would escape with her
life ;
Then in the gray of the morning it
seem'd she stood by me and
smiled,
And the doctor came at his hour, and
we went to see to the child.

VIII

He had brought his ghastly tools ; he
believed her asleep again—
Her dear, long, lean, little arms lying
out on the counterpane— 70
Say that His day is done ! Ah, why
should we care what they say ?
The Lord of the children had heard
her, and Emmie had past away.

DEDICATORY POEM TO THE PRINCESS ALICE

DEAD PRINCESS, living Power, if that
which lived
Truelife live on—and if the fatal kiss,

Born of true life and love, divorce
thee not
From earthly love and life — if what
we call
The spirit flash not all at once from
out
This shadow into Substance — then
perhaps
The mellow'd murmur of the people's
praise
From thine own State, and all our
breadth of realm,
Where Love and Longing dress thy
deeds in light,
Ascends to thee; and this March
morn that sees
Thy Soldier-brother's bridal orange-
bloom
Break thro' the yews and cypress of
thy grave,
And thine Imperial mother smile
again,
May send one ray to thee! and who
can tell —
Thou — England's England - loving
daughter — thou
Dying so English thou wouldst have
her flag
Borne on thy coffin — where is he can
swear
But that some broken gleam from our
poor earth
May touch thee, while, remembering
thee, I lay
At thy pale feet this ballad of the
deeds
Of England, and her banner in the
East?

THE DEFENCE OF LUCKNOW

I

BANNER of England, not for a sea-
son, O banner of Britain, hast
thou
Floated in conquering battle or flap-
to the battle-cry!
Never with mightier glory than when
we had rear'd thee on high
Flying at top of the roofs in the
ghastly siege of Lucknow —
Shot thro' the staff or the halyard, but
ever we raised thee anew,
And ever upon the topmost roof our
banner of England blew.

II

Frail were the works that defended
the hold that we held with our
lives —
Women and children among us, God
help them, our children and
wives!
Hold it we might — and for fifteen
days or for twenty at most.
'Never surrender, I charge you, but
every man die at his post!' ¹⁰
Voice of the dead whom we loved,
our Lawrence the best of the
brave;
Cold were his brows when we kiss'd
him — we laid him that night in
his grave.
'Every man die at his post!' and
there hail'd on our houses and
halls
Death from their rifle-bullets, and
death from their cannon-balls,
Death in our innermost chamber, and
death at our slight barricade,
Death while we stood with the mus-
ket, and death while we stooped
to the spade,
Death to the dying, and wounds to
the wounded, for often there
fell,
Striking the hospital wall, crashing
thro' it, their shot and their
shell,
Death — for their spies were among
us, their marksmen were told of
our best,
So that the brute bullet broke thro'
the brain that could think for
the rest; ²⁰
Bullets would sing by our foreheads,
and bullets would rain at our
feet —
Fire from ten thousand at once of the
rebels that girdled us round —
Death at the glimpse of a finger from
over the breadth of a street,
Death from the heights of the mosque
and the palace, and death in the
ground!
Mine? yes, a mine! Countermine!
down, down! and creep thro'
the hole!
Keep the revolver in hand! you can
hear him — the murderous mole!
Quiet, ah! quiet — wait till the point
of the pickaxe be thro'!

Click with the pick, coming nearer
and nearer again than before —
Now let it speak, and you fire, and
the dark pioneer is no more;
And ever upon the topmost roof our
banner of England blew ! 30

III

Ay, but the foe sprung his mine many
times, and it chanced on a day
Soon as the blast of that underground
thunder-clap echo'd away,
Dark thro' the smoke and the sulphur
like so many fiends in their
hell —

Cannon-shot, musket-shot, volley on
volley, and yell upon yell —
Fiercely on all the defences our myriad
enemy fell.

What have they done ? where is it ?
Out yonder. Guard the Redan !
Storm at the Water-gate ! storm at the
Bailey-gate ! storm, and it ran
Surging and swaying all round us, as
ocean on every side

Plunges and heaves at a bank that is
daily drown'd by the tide — 39
So many thousands that, if they be
bold enough, who shall escape ?
Kill or be kill'd, live or die, they shall
know we are soldiers and men !

Ready ! take aim at their leaders —
their masses are gapp'd with
our grape —

Backward they reel like the wave, like
the wave flinging forward
again,

Flying and foild at the last by the
handful they could not subdue ;
And ever upon the topmost roof our
banner of England blew.

IV

Handful of men as we were, we were
English in heart and in limb,
Strong with the strength of the race to
command, to obey, to endure,
Each of us fought as if hope for the
garrison hung but on him ;
Still — could we watch at all points ?
we were every day fewer and
fewer.

There was a whisper among us, but
only a whisper that past : 50
Children and wives — if the tigers
leap into the fold unawares —

Every man die at his post — and the
foe may outlive us at last —
Better to fall by the hands that they
love, than to fall into theirs !

Roar upon roar in a moment two mines
by the enemy sprung
Clove into perilous chasms our walls
and our poor palisades.

Rifleman, true is your heart, but be
sure that your hand be as true !
Sharp is the fire of assault, better aimed
are your flank fusillades —

Twice do we hurl them to earth from
the ladders to which they had
clung,

Twice from the ditch where they shelter
we drive them with hand-
grenades ;

And ever upon the topmost roof our
banner of England blew. 60

V

Then on another wild morning another
wild earthquake out-tore
Clean from our lines of defence ten or
twelve good paces or more.

Rifleman, high on the roof, hidden
there from the light of the sun —
One has leapt up on the breach, crying
out : ' Follow me, follow
me ! ' —

Mark him — he falls ! then another,
and him too, and down goes he.
Had they been bold enough then, who
can tell but the traitors had
won ?

Boardings and rafters and doors — an
embrasure ! make way for the
gun !

Now double-charge it with grape ! It
is charged and we fire, and they
run.

Praise to our Indian brothers, and let
the dark face have his due !

Thanks to the kindly dark faces who
fought with us, faithful and
few, 70

Fought with the bravest among us,
and drove them, and smote
them, and slew,

That ever upon the topmost roof our
banner in India blew.

VI

Men will forget what we suffer and
not what we do. We can fight !

But to be soldier all day, and be sentinel all thro' the night —
 Ever the mine and assault, our sallies, their lying alarms,
 Bugles and drums in the darkness, and shoutings and soundings to arms,
 Ever the labor of fifty that had to be done by five,
 Ever the marvel among us that one should be left alive,
 Ever the day with its traitorous death from the loopholes around,
 Ever the night with its coffinless corpse to be laid in the ground, 80
 Heat like the mouth of a hell, or a deluge of cataract skies,
 Stench of old offal decaying, and infinite torment of flies,
 Thoughts of the breezes of May blowing over an English field,
 Cholera, scurvy, and fever, the wound that *would* not be heal'd,
 Lopping away of the limb by the pitiful-pitiless knife, —
 Torture and trouble in vain, — for it never could save us a life.
 Valor of delicate women who tended the hospital bed,
 Horror of women in travail among the dying and dead,
 Grief for our perishing children, and never a moment for grief,
 Toil and ineffable weariness, faltering hopes of relief, 90
 Havelock baffled, or beaten, or butcher'd for all that we knew —
 Then day and night, day and night, coming down on the still-shatter'd walls
 Millions of musket-bullets, and thousands of cannon-balls —
 But ever upon the topmost roof our banner of England blew.

VII

Hark cannonade, fusillade! is it true what was told by the scout,
 Outram and Havelock breaking their way through the fell mutineers?
 Surely the pibroch of Europe is ringing again in our ears!
 All on a sudden the garrison utter a jubilant shout,
 Havelock's glorious Highlanders answer with conquering cheers,

Sick from the hospital echo them, women and children come out,
 Blessing the wholesome white faces of Havelock's good fusileers, 101
 Kissing the war-harden'd hand of the Highlander wet with their tears!
 Dance to the pibroch! — saved! we are saved! — is it you? is it you?
 Saved by the valor of Havelock, saved by the blessing of heaven!
 'Hold it for fifteen days!' we have held it for eighty-seven!
 And ever aloft on the palace roof the old banner of England blew.

SIR JOHN OLDCASTLE, LORD COBHAM

(IN WALES)

My friend should meet me somewhere hereabout
 To take me to that hiding in the hills.

I have broke their cage, no gilded one, I trow —
 I read no more the prisoner's mute wall
 Scribbled or carved upon the pitiless stone;
 I find hard rocks, hard life, hard cheer, or none,
 For I am emptier than a friar's brains;
 But God is with me in this wilderness,
 These wet black passes and foam-churning chasms —
 And God's free air, and hope of better things. 10

I would I knew their speech; not now to glean,
 Not now — I hope to do it — some scatter'd ears,
 Some ears for Christ in this wild field of Wales —
 But, bread, merely for bread. This tongue that wagg'd
 They said with such heretical arrogance
 Against the proud archbishop Arundel —
 So much God's cause was fluent in it — is here
 But as a Latin Bible to the crowd;

'Bara!' — what use? The shepherd,
when I speak,
Vailing a sudden eyelid with his hard
'Dim Saesneg,' passes, wroth at things
of old —²¹
No fault of mine. Had he God's
word in Welsh
He might be kindlier; happily come
the day!

Not least art thou, thou little Beth-
lehem
In Judah, for in thee the Lord was
born;
Nor thou in Britain, little Lutter-
worth,
Least, for in thee the word was born
again.

Heaven-sweet Evangel, ever-living
word,
Who whilome spakest to the South in
Greek²⁹
About the soft Mediterranean shores,
And then in Latin to the Latin crowd,
As good need was — thou hast come
to talk our isle.
Hereafter thou, fulfilling Pentecost,
Must learn to use the tongues of all
the world.

Yet art thou thine own witness that
thou bringest
Not peace, a sword, a fire.

What did he say,
My frightened Wiclif-preacher whom I
crost
In flying hither? that one night a
crowd

Throng'd the waste field about the
city gates;

The king was on them suddenly with
a host.⁴⁰

Why there? they came to hear their
preacher. Then

Some cried on Cobham, on the good
Lord Cobham;

Ay, for they love me! but the king —
nor voice

Nor finger raised against him — took
and hang'd,

Took, hang'd and burnt — how many
— thirty-nine —

Call'd it rebellion — hang'd, poor
friends, as rebels

And burn'd alive as heretics! for your
priest

Labels — to take the king along with
him —

All heresy, treason; but to call men
traitors

May make men traitors.

Rose of Lancaster,
Red in thy birth, redder with house-
hold war,⁵¹

Now reddest with the blood of holy
men,

Redder to be, red rose of Lancaster —
If somewhere in the North, as Rumor

sang
Fluttering the hawks of this crown-
lusting line —

By firth and loch thy silver sister
grow,¹

That were my rose, there my alle-
giance due.

Self-starved, they say — nay, mur-
der'd, doubtless dead.

So to this king I cleaved. My friend
was he,

Once my fast friend; I would have
given my life⁶⁰

To help his own from scathe, a thou-
sand lives

To save his soul. He might have
come to learn

Our Wiclif's learning; but the worldly
priests,

Who fear the king's hard common-
sense should find

What rotten piles uphold their mason-
work,

Urge him to foreign war. O, had he
will'd

I might have stricken a lusty stroke
for him,

But he would not; far liever led my
friend

Back to the pure and universal church,
But he would not — whether that heir-
less flaw⁷⁰

In his throne's title make him feel so
frail,

He leans on Antichrist; or that his
mind,

So quick, so capable in soldiership,
In matters of the faith, alas the

while!

More worth than all the kingdoms of
this world,

Runs in the rut, a coward to the
priest.

¹ Richard II.

Burnt—good Sir Roger Acton, my
 dear friend!
 Burnt too, my faithful preacher, Beverley!
 Lord, give thou power to thy two
 witnesses,
 Lest the false faith make merry over
 them!
 Two—nay, but thirty-nine have risen
 and stand,
 Dark with the smoke of human sacrifice,
 Before thy light, and cry continually—
 Cry—against whom?
 Him, who should bear the sword
 Of Justice—what! the kingly, kindly
 boy;
 Who took the world so easily heretofore,
 My boon companion, tavern-fellow—
 him
 Who jibed and japed—in many a
 merry tale
 That shook our sides—at pardoners,
 summoners,
 Friars, absolution-sellers, monkeries
 And nunneries, when the wild hour
 and the wine
 Had set the wits aflame.
 Harry of Monmouth,
 Or Amurath of the East?
 Better to sink
 Thy fleurs-de-lys in slime again, and
 fling
 Thy royalty back into the riotous
 fits
 Of wine and harlotry—thy shame,
 and mine,
 Thy comrade—than to persecute the
 Lord,
 And play the Saul that never will be
 Paul.

Burnt, burnt! and while this mitred
 Arundel
 Dooms our unlicensed preacher to the
 flame,
 The mitre-sanction'd harlot draws his
 clerks
 Into the suburb—their hard celibacy,
 Sworn to be veriest ice of pureness,
 molten
 Into adulterous living, or such crimes
 As holy Paul—a shame to speak of
 them—
 Among the heathen—

Sanctuary granted
 To bandit, thief, assassin—yea, to
 him
 Who hacks his mother's throat—denied
 to him
 Who finds the Saviour in his mother
 tongue.
 The Gospel, the priest's pearl, flung
 down to swine—
 The swine, lay-men, lay-women, who
 will come,
 God willing, to outlearn the filthy
 friar.
 Ah, rather, Lord, than that thy Gospel,
 meant
 To course and range thro' all the
 world, should be
 Tether'd to these dead pillars of the
 Church—
 Rather than so, if thou wilt have it so,
 Burst vein, snap sinew, and crack
 heart, and life
 Pass in the fire of Babylon! but how
 long,
 O Lord, how long!
 My friend should meet me here.
 Here is the copse, the fountain and—
 a cross!
 To thee, dead wood, I bow not head
 nor knees.
 Rather to thee, green boscaje, work
 of God,
 Black holly, and white-flower'd way-
 faring-tree!
 Rather to thee, thou living water,
 drawn
 By this good Wiclif mountain down
 from heaven,
 And speaking clearly in thy native
 tongue—
 No Latin—He that thirsteth, come
 and drink!

Eh! how I anger'd Arundel asking
 me
 To worship Holy Cross! I spread
 mine arms,
 God's work, I said, a cross of flesh and
 blood
 And holier. That was heresy.—My
 good friend
 By this time should be with me.—
 'Images?'
 'Bury them as God's truer images
 Are daily buried.' 'Heresy.—Pen-
 ance?' 'Fast,

Hair-shirt and scourge — nay, let a man repent,
 Do penance in his heart, God hears him.' 'Heresy —
 Not shriven, not saved?' 'What profits an ill priest
 Between me and my God? I would not spurn
 Good counsel of good friends, but shrive myself —
 No, not to an Apostle.' 'Heresy.' —
 My friend is long in coming. — 'Pilgrimages?'¹⁴¹
 'Drink, bagpipes, revelling, devil's dances, vice.
 The poor man's money gone to fat the friar.
 Who reads of begging saints in Scripture?' — 'Heresy' —
 Hath he been here — not found me — gone again?
 Have I mislearnt our place of meeting? — 'Bread —
 Bread left after the blessing?' how they stared,
 That was their main test-question — glared at me!
 'He veild Himself in flesh, and now He veils
 His flesh in bread, body and bread together.'¹⁵⁰
 Then rose the howl of all the cassock'd wolves,
 'No bread, no bread. God's body!' Archbishop, bishop,
 Priors, canons, friars, bell-ringers, parish-clerks —
 'No bread, no bread!' — 'Authority of the Church,
 Power of the keys!' — Then I, God help me, I
 So mock'd, so spurn'd, so baited two whole days —
 I lost myself and fell from evenness,
 And rail'd at all the Popes that, ever since
 Sylvester shed the venom of world-wealth
 Into the church, had only proven themselves¹⁶⁰
 Poisoners, murderers. Well — God pardon all —
 Me, them, and all the world — yes, that proud priest,
 That mock-meek mouth of utter Antichrist,

That traitor to King Richard and the truth,
 Who rose and doom'd me to the fire. Amen!
 Nay, I can burn, so that the Lord of life
 Be by me in my death.
 Those three! the fourth
 Was like the Son of God! Not burnt were they.
 On them the smell of burning had not past.
 That was a miracle to convert the king.¹⁷⁰
 These Pharisees, this Caiaphas-Arundel
 What miracle could turn? He here again,
 He thwarting their traditions of Himself,
 He would be found a heretic to Himself,
 And doom'd to burn alive.
 So, caught, I burn.
 Burn? heathen men have borne as much as this,
 For freedom, or the sake of those they loved,
 Or some less cause, some cause far less than mine;
 For every other cause is less than mine.
 The moth will singe her wings, and singed return,¹⁸⁰
 Her love of light quenching her fear of pain —
 How now, my soul, we do not heed the fire?
 Faint-hearted? tut! — faint-stomach'd! faint as I am,
 God willing, I will burn for Him.
 Who comes?
 A thousand marks are set upon my head.
 Friend? — foe perhaps — a tussle for it then!
 Nay, but my friend. Thou art so well disguised,
 I knew thee not. Hast thou brought bread with thee?
 I have not broken bread for fifty hours.
 None? I am damn'd already by the priest¹⁹⁰
 For holding there was bread where bread was none —
 No bread. My friends await me yonder? Yes.

Lead on then. *Up* the mountain? Is
it far?
Not far. Climb first and reach me
down thy hand.
I am not like to die for lack of
bread,
For I must live to testify by fire.¹

COLUMBUS

CHAINS, my good lord! In your
raised brows I read
Some wonder at our chamber orna-
ments.
We brought this iron from our isles of
gold.

Does the King know you deign to
visit him
Whom once he rose from off his throne
to greet
Before his people, like his brother
king?
I saw your face that morning in the
crowd.

At Barcelona—tho' you were not
then
So bearded. Yes. The city deck'd
herself
To meet me, roar'd my name; the
King, the Queen,¹⁰
Bade me be seated, speak, and tell
them all
The story of my voyage, and while I
spoke
The crowd's roar fell as at the 'Peace,
be still!'
And when I ceased to speak, the King,
the Queen,
Sank from their thrones, and melted
into tears,
And knelt, and lifted hand and heart
and voice
In praise to God who led me thro' the
waste.
And then the great 'Laudamus' rose
to heaven.

Chains for the Admiral of the Ocean!
chains
For him who gave a new heaven, a
new earth,²⁰
As holy John had prophesied of me,
¹ He was burnt on Christmas Day, 1417.

Gave glory and more empire to the
kings
Of Spain than all their battles! chains
for him
Who push'd his prow into the setting
sun,
And made West East, and sail'd the
Dragon's Mouth,
And came upon the Mountain of the
World,
And saw the rivers roll from Paradise!

Chains! we are Admirals of the
Ocean, we,
We and our sons for ever. Ferdinand
Hath sign'd it and our Holy Catholic
Queen —³⁰
Of the Ocean — of the Indies — Admi-
rals we —
Our title, which we never mean to
yield,
Our guerdon not alone for what we
did,
But our amends for all we might have
done —
The vast occasion of our stronger
life —
Eighteen long years of waste, seven
in your Spain,
Lost, showing courts and kings a
truth the babe
Will suck in with his milk hereafter
— earth
A sphere.

Were *you* at Salamanca? No.
We fronted there the learning of all
Spain,⁴⁰
All their cosmogonies, their astron-
omies.
Guess-work *they* guess'd it, but the
golden guess
Is morning-star to the full round of
truth.
No guess-work! I was certain of my
goal;
Some thought it heresy, but that would
not hold.
King David call'd the heavens a hide,
a tent
Spread over earth, and so this earth
was flat.
Some cited old Lactantius; could it
be
That trees grew downward, rain fell
upward, men

Walk'd like the fly on ceilings? and
besides, ⁵⁰
The great Augustine wrote that none
could breathe
Within the zone of heat; so might
there be
Two Adams, two mankind, and that
was clean
Against God's word. Thus was I
beaten back,
And chiefly to my sorrow by the
Church,
And thought to turn my face from
Spain, appeal
Once more to France or England; but
our Queen
Recall'd me, for at last their High-
nesses
Were half-assured this earth might be
a sphere.

All glory to the all-blessed Trinity,
All glory to the mother of our Lord, ⁶¹
And Holy Church, from whom I never
swerved
Not even by one hair's-breadth of
heresy,
I have accomplish'd what I came to do.

Not yet—not all—last night a
dream—I sail'd
On my first voyage, harass'd by the
frights
Of my first crew, their curses and
their groans,
The great flame-banner borne by Ten-
eriffe,
The compass, like an old friend false
at last
In our most need, appall'd them, and
the wind ⁷⁰
Still westward, and the weedy seas—
at length
The land-bird, and the branch with
berries on it,
The carven staff—and last the light,
the light
On Guanahani! but I changed the
name;
San Salvador I call'd it; and the light
Grew as I gazed, and brought out a
broad sky
Of dawning over—not those alien
palms,
The marvel of that fair new nature—
not

That Indian isle, but our most ancient
East,
Moriah with Jerusalem; and I saw ⁸⁰
The glory of the Lord flash up, and
beat
Thro' all the homely town from jasper,
sapphire,
Chalcedony, emerald, sardonyx, sar-
dus,
Chrysolite, beryl, topaz, chrysoprase,
Jacinth, and amethyst—and those
twelve gates,
Pearl—and I woke, and thought—
death—I shall die—
I am written in the Lamb's own Book
of Life
To walk within the glory of the Lord
Sunless and moonless, utter light—
but no!
The Lord had sent this bright, strange
dream to me ⁹⁰
To mind me of the secret vow I
made
When Spain was waging war against
the Moor—
I strove myself with Spain against the
Moor.
There came two voices from the Sep-
ulchre,
Two friars crying that, if Spain should
oust
The Moslem from her limit, he, the
fierce
Soldan of Egypt, would break down
and raze
The blessed tomb of Christ; whereon
I vow'd
That, if our princes harken'd to my
prayer,
Whatever wealth I brought from that
new world ¹⁰⁰
Should, in this old, be consecrate to
lead
A new crusade against the Saracen,
And free the Holy Sepulchre from
thrall.

Gold? I had brought your princes
gold enough
If left alone! Being but a Genovese,
I am handled worse than had I been a
Moor,
And breach'd the belting wall of Cam-
balu,
And given the Great Khan's palaces
to the Moor.

Or clutch'd the sacred crown of Pres-
 ter John,
 And cast it to the Moor. But *had* I
 brought ¹¹⁰
 From Solomon's now-recover'd Ophir
 all
 The gold that Solomon's navies carried
 home,
 Would that have gild'd *me*? Blue
 blood of Spain,
 Tho' quartering your own royal arms
 of Spain,
 I have not; blue blood and black
 blood of Spain,
 The noble and the convict of Castile,
 Howl'd me from Hispaniola. For you
 know
 The flies at home, that ever swarm
 about
 And cloud the highest heads, and
 murmur down
 Truth in the distance—these out-
 buzz'd me so ¹²⁰
 That even our prudent King, our
 righteous Queen—
 I pray'd them being so calumniated
 They would commission one of weight
 and worth
 To judge between my slander'd self
 and me—
 Fonseca my main enemy at their court,
 They sent me out *his* tool, Bovadilla,
 one
 As ignorant and impolitic as a beast—
 Blockish irreverence, brainless greed
 — who sack'd
 My dwelling, seized upon my papers,
 loosed
 My captives, feed the rebels of the
 crown, ¹³⁰
 Sold the crown-farms for all but no-
 thing, gave
 All but free leave for all to work the
 mines,
 Drove me and my good brothers home
 in chains,
 And gathering ruthless gold—a single
 piece
 Weigh'd nigh four thousand Castilla-
 nos—so
 They tell me—weigh'd him down
 into the abyss—
 The hurricane of the latitude on him
 fell,
 The seas of our discovering over-roll
 Him and his gold; the frailer caravel,

With what was mine, came happily to
 the shore.
 There was a glimmering of God's ¹⁴⁰
 hand.

And God
 Hath more than glimmer'd on me. O
 my lord,
 I swear to you I heard His voice be-
 tween
 The thunders in the black Veragua
 nights,
 'O soul of little faith, slow to believe!
 Have I not been about thee from thy
 birth?
 Given thee the keys of the great Ocean-
 sea?
 Set thee in light till time shall be no
 more?
 Is it I who have deceived thee or the
 world?
 Endure! thou hast done so well for
 men, that men ¹⁵⁰
 Cry out against thee. Was it other-
 wise
 With mine own Son?'

And more than once in days
 Of doubt and cloud and storm, when
 drowning hope
 Sank all but out of sight, I heard His
 voice,
 'Be not cast down. I lead thee by
 the hand,
 Fear not.' And I shall hear His voice
 again—
 I know that He has led me all my
 life,
 I am not yet too old to work His
 will—
 His voice again.

Still for all that, my lord,
 I lying here bedridden and alone, ¹⁶⁰
 Cast off, put by, scouted by court and
 king—
 The first discoverer starves—his fol-
 lowers, all
 Flower into fortune—our world's
 way—and I,
 Without a roof that I can call mine
 own,
 With scarce a coin to buy a meal
 withal,
 And seeing what a door for scoundrel
 scum

I open'd to the West, thro' which the
 lust,
 Villainy, violence, avarice, of your
 Spain
 Pour'd in on all those happy naked
 isles —
 Their kindly native princes slain or
 slaved, ¹⁷⁰
 Their wives and children Spanish con-
 cubines,
 Their innocent hospitalities quench'd
 in blood,
 Some dead of hunger, some beneath
 the scourge,
 Some over-labor'd, some by their own
 hands, —
 Yea, the dear mothers, crazing Na-
 ture, kill
 Their babies at the breast for hate of
 Spain —
 Ah God, the harmless people whom
 we found
 In Hispaniola's island-Paradise!
 Who took us for the very gods from
 heaven,
 And we have sent them very fiends
 from hell; ¹⁸⁰
 And I myself, myself not blameless, I
 Could sometimes wish I had never led
 the way.

Only the ghost of our great Catholic
 Queen
 Smiles on me, saying, 'Be thou com-
 forted!
 This creedless people will be brought
 to Christ
 And own the holy governance of
 Rome.'

But who could dream that we, who
 bore the Cross
 Thither, were excommunicated there,
 For curbing crimes that scandalized
 the Cross,
 By him, the Catalanian Minorite, ¹⁹⁰
 Rome's Vicar in our Indies? who be-
 lieve
 These hard memorials of our truth to
 Spain
 Clung closer to us for a longer term
 Than any friend of ours at Court?
 and yet
 Pardon—too harsh, unjust. I am
 rack'd with pain.

You see that I have hung them by
 my bed,
 And I will have them buried in my
 grave.

Sir, in that flight of ages which are
 God's
 Own voice to justify the dead—per-
 chance
 Spain, once the most chivalric race
 on earth, ²⁰⁰
 Spain, then the mightiest, wealthiest
 realm on earth,
 So made by me, may seek to unbury
 me,
 To lay me in some shrine of this old
 Spain,
 Or in that vaster Spain I leave to
 Spain.
 Then some one standing by my grave
 will say,
 'Behold the bones of Christopher Co-
 ldn' —
 'Ay, but the chains, what do *they*
 mean—the chains?'
 I sorrow for that kindly child of Spain
 Who then will have to answer, 'These
 same chains
 Bound these same bones back thro'
 the Atlantic sea, ²¹⁰
 Which he unchain'd for all the world
 to come.'

O Queen of Heaven who seest the
 souls in hell
 And purgatory, I suffer all as much
 As they do—for the moment. Stay,
 my son
 Is here anon; my son will speak for
 me
 Ablier than I can in these spasms that
 grind
 Bone against bone. You will not.
 One last word.

You move about the Court: I pray
 you tell
 King Ferdinand who plays with me,
 that one
 Whose life has been no play with him
 and his ²²⁰
 Hidalgos—shipwrecks, famines, fe-
 vers, fights,
 Mutinies, treacheries—wink'd at, and
 condoned—

That I am loyal to him till the death,
 And ready—tho' our Holy Catholic
 Queen,
 Who fain had pledged her jewels on
 my first voyage,
 Whose hope was mine to spread the
 Catholic faith,
 Who wept with me when I return'd
 in chains,
 Who sits beside the blessed Virgin
 now,
 To whom I send my prayer by night
 and day—
 She is gone—but you will tell the
 King, that I,
 Rack'd as I am with gout, and wrench'd
 with pains
 Gain'd in the service of His Highness,
 yet
 Am ready to sail forth on one last
 voyage,
 And readier, if the King would hear,
 to lead
 One last crusade against the Saracen,
 And save the Holy Sepulchre from
 thrall.

Going? I am old and slighted; you
 have dared
 Somewhat perhaps in coming? my
 poor thanks!
 I am but an alien and a Genovese.

THE VOYAGE OF MAELDUNE

(FOUNDED ON AN IRISH LEGEND
 A. D. 700)

I

I WAS the chief of the race—he had
 stricken my father dead—
 But I gather'd my fellows together, I
 swore I would strike off his
 head.
 Each of them look'd like a king, and
 was noble in birth as in worth,
 And each of them boasted he sprang
 from the oldest race upon earth.
 Each was as brave in the fight as the
 bravest hero of song,
 And each of them liefer had died than
 have done one another a wrong.
 He lived on an isle in the ocean—he
 sail'd on a Friday morn—
 He that had slain my father the day
 before I was born.

II

And we came to the isle in the ocean,
 and there on the shore was
 he.
 But a sudden blast blew us out and
 away thro' a boundless sea. 10

III

And we came to the Silent Isle that
 we never had touch'd at before,
 Where a silent ocean always broke on
 a silent shore,
 And the brooks glitter'd on in the
 light without sound, and the
 long waterfalls
 Pour'd in a thunderless plunge to the
 base of the mountain walls,
 And the poplar and cypress unshaken
 by storm flourish'd up beyond
 sight,
 And the pine shot aloft from the crag
 to an unbelievable height,
 And high in the heaven above it there
 flicker'd a songless lark,
 And the cock could n't crow, and the
 bull could n't low, and the dog
 could n't bark.
 And round it we went, and thro' it,
 but never a murmur, a breath—
 It was all of it fair as life, it was all
 of it quiet as death, 20
 And we hated the beautiful isle, for
 whenever we strove to speak
 Our voices were thinner and fainter
 than any flittermouse shriek;
 And the men that were mighty of
 tongue and could raise such a
 battle-cry
 That a hundred who heard it would
 rush on a thousand lances and
 die—
 O, they to be dumb'd by the charm!
 —so fluster'd with anger were
 they
 They almost fell on each other; but
 after we sail'd away.

IV

And we came to the Isle of Shouting;
 we landed, a score of wild birds
 Cried from the topmost summit with
 human voices and words.
 Once in an hour they cried, and when-
 ever their voices peal'd 29
 The steer fell down at the plow and
 the harvest died from the field,

And the men dropt dead in the valleys
 and half of the cattle went lame,
 And the roof sank in on the hearth,
 and the dwelling broke into
 flame ;
 And the shouting of these wild birds
 ran into the hearts of my crew,
 Till they shouted along with the
 shouting and seized one another
 and slew.
 But I drew them the one from the
 other ; I saw that we could not
 stay,
 And we left the dead to the birds, and
 we sail'd with our wounded
 away.

V

And we came to the Isle of Flowers ;
 their breath met us out on the
 seas,
 For the Spring and the middle Sum-
 mer sat each on the lap of the
 breeze ;
 And the red passion-flower to the cliffs,
 and the dark-blue clematis,
 clung,
 And starr'd with a myriad blossom the
 long convolvulus hung ; 40
 And the topmost spire of the moun-
 tain was lilies in lieu of snow,
 And the lilies like glaciers winded
 down, running out below
 Thro' the fire of the tulip and poppy,
 the blaze of gorse, and the blush
 Of millions of roses that sprang with-
 out leaf or a thorn from the
 bush ;
 And the whole isle-side flashing down
 from the peak without ever a
 tree
 Swept like a torrent of gems from the
 sky to the blue of the sea.
 And we roll'd upon capes of crocus
 and vaunted our kith and our
 kin,
 And we wallow'd in beds of lilies, and
 chanted the triumph of Finn,
 Till each like a golden image was pol-
 len'd from head to feet
 And each was as dry as a cricket, with
 thirst in the middle-day heat. 50
 Blossom and blossom, and promise of
 blossom, but never a fruit !
 And we hated the Flowering Isle, as
 we hated the isle that was mute,

And we tore up the flowers by the
 million and flung them in bight
 and bay,
 And we left but a naked rock, and in
 anger we sail'd away.

VI

And we came to the Isle of Fruits ; all
 round from the cliffs and the
 capes,
 Purple or amber, dangled a hundred
 fathom of grapes,
 And the warm melon lay like a little
 sun on the tawny sand,
 And the fig ran up from the beach and
 rioted over the land,
 And the mountain arose like a jewell'd
 throne thro' the fragrant air,
 Glowing with all-color'd plums and
 with golden masses of pear, 60
 And the crimson and scarlet of berries
 that flamed upon bine and vine,
 But in every berry and fruit was the
 poisonous pleasure of wine ;
 And the peak of the mountain was
 apples, the hugest that ever
 were seen,
 And they prest, as they grew, on each
 other, with hardly a leaflet be-
 tween,
 And all of them redder than rosiest
 health or than utterest shame.
 And setting, when Even descended,
 the very sunset aflame.
 And we stay'd three days, and we
 gorged and we madden'd, till
 every one drew
 His sword on his fellow to slay him,
 and ever they struck and they
 slew ;
 And myself, I had eaten but sparsely,
 and fought till I sunder'd the
 fray,
 Then I bade them remember my fa-
 ther's death, and we sail'd away.

VII

And we came to the Isle of Fire ; we
 were lured by the light from
 afar, 71
 For the peak sent up one league of fire
 to the Northern Star ;
 Lured by the glare and the blare, but
 scarcely could stand upright,
 For the whole isle shudder'd and shook
 like a man in a mortal affright.

We were giddy besides with the fruits
 we had gorged, and so crazed
 that at last
 There were some leap'd into the fire ;
 and away we sail'd, and we past
 Over that undersea isle, where the
 water is clearer than air.
 Down we look'd — what a garden ! O
 bliss, what a Paradise there !
 Towers of a happier time, low down
 in a rainbow deep
 Silent palaces, quiet fields of eternal
 sleep !
 And three of the gentlest and best of
 my people, whate'er I could say,
 Plunged head-down in the sea, and
 the Paradise trembled away.

VIII

And we came to the Bounteous Isle,
 where the heavens lean low on
 the land,
 And ever at dawn from the cloud glitter'd
 o'er us a sun-bright hand,
 Then it open'd and dropt at the side of
 each man, as he rose from his
 rest,
 Bread enough for his need till the labor-
 less day dipt under the west ;
 And we wander'd about it and thro' it.
 O, never was time so good !
 And we sang of the triumphs of Finn,
 and the boast of our ancient
 blood,
 And we gazed at the wandering wave
 as we sat by the gurgle of
 springs,
 And we chanted the songs of the Bards
 and the glories of fairy kings.
 But at length we began to be weary,
 to sigh, and to stretch and yawn,
 Till we hated the Bounteous Isle and
 the sun-bright hand of the dawn,
 For there was not an enemy near, but
 the whole green isle was our
 own,
 And we took to playing at ball, and
 we took to throwing the stone,
 And we took to playing at battle, but
 that was a perilous play,
 For the passion of battle was in us, we
 slew and we sail'd away.

IX

And we came to the Isle of Witches
 and heard their musical cry —

'Come to us, O, come, come !' in the
 stormy red of a sky
 Dashing the fires and the shadows of
 dawn on the beautiful shapes,
 For a wild witch naked as heaven
 stood on each of the loftiest
 capes,
 And a hundred ranged on the rock like
 white sea-birds in a row,
 And a hundred gamboll'd and pranced
 on the wrecks in the sand below,
 And a hundred splash'd from the
 ledges, and bosom'd the burst
 of the spray ;
 But I knew we should fall on each
 other, and hastily sail'd away.

X

And we came in an evil time to the
 Isle of the Double Towers,
 One was of smooth-cut stone, one
 carved all over with flowers,
 But an earthquake always moved in
 the hollows under the dells,
 And they shock'd on each other and
 butted each other with clashing
 of bells,
 And the daws flew out of the towers
 and jangled and wrangled in
 vain,
 And the clash and boom of the bells
 rang into the heart and the
 brain,
 Till the passion of battle was on us,
 and all took sides with the
 towers,
 There were some for the clean-cut
 stone, there were more for the
 carven flowers,
 And the wrathful thunder of God
 peal'd over us all the day,
 For the one half slew the other, and
 after we sail'd away.

XI

And we came to the Isle of a Saint
 who had sail'd with Saint Bren-
 dan of yore,
 He had lived ever since on the isle
 and his winters were fifteen
 score,
 And his voice was low as from other
 worlds, and his eyes were sweet,
 And his white hair sank to his heels,
 and his white beard fell to his
 feet,

And he spake to me : 'O Maeldune,
 let be this purpose of thine !
 Remember the words of the Lord
 when he told us, "Vengeance
 is mine !" 120
 His fathers have slain thy fathers in
 war or in single strife,
 Thy fathers have slain his fathers,
 each taken a life for a life,
 Thy father had slain his father, how
 long shall the murder last ?
 Go back to the Isle of Finn and suffer
 the Past to be Past.'
 And we kiss'd the fringe of his beard,
 and we pray'd as we heard
 him pray,
 And the holy man he assoil'd us, and
 sadly we sail'd away.

XII

And we came to the isle we were
 blown from, and there on the
 shore was he,
 The man that had slain my father. I
 saw him and let him be.
 O, weary was I of the travel, the
 trouble, the strife, and the sin,
 When I landed again with a tithe of
 my men, on the Isle of Finn ! 130

DE PROFUNDIS :

THE TWO GREETINGS

I

Out of the deep, my child, out of the
 deep,
 Where all that was to be, in all that
 was,
 Whirl'd for a million æons thro' the
 vast
 Waste dawn of multitudinous-eddy-
 ing light—
 Out of the deep, my child, out of the
 deep,
 Thro' all this changing world of
 changeless law,
 And every phase of ever-heightening
 life,
 And nine long months of antenatal
 gloom,
 With this last moon, this crescent—
 her dark orb
 Touch'd with earth's light—thou
 comest, darling boy ;

Our own ; a babe in lineament and
 limb
 Perfect, and prophet of the perfect
 man ;
 Whose face and form are hers and
 mine in one,
 Indissolubly married like our love.
 Live, and be happy in thyself, and
 serve
 This mortal race thy kin so well that
 men
 May bless thee as we bless thee, O
 young life
 Breaking with laughter from the
 dark ; and may
 The fated channel where thy motion
 lives
 Be prosperously shaped, and sway
 thy course
 Along the years of haste and random
 youth
 Unshatter'd ; then full-current thro'
 full man ;
 And last in kindly curves, with gen-
 tlest fall,
 By quiet fields, a slowly-dying power,
 To that last deep where we and thou
 are still.

II

I

Out of the deep, my child, out of the
 deep,
 From that great deep, before our
 world begins,
 Whereon the Spirit of God moves as
 he will—
 Out of the deep, my child, out of the
 deep,
 From that true world within the
 world we see,
 Whereof our world is but the bound-
 ing shore—
 Out of the deep, Spirit, out of the
 deep,
 With this ninth moon, that sends the
 hidden sun
 Down yon dark sea, thou comest, dar-
 ling boy.

II

For in the world which is not ours
 They said,
 'Let us make man,' and that which
 should be man,

From that one light no man can look
upon,
Drew to this shore lit by the suns and
moons
And all the shadows. O dear Spirit,
half-lost
In thine own shadow and this fleshly
sign
That thou art thou—who wailest be-
ing born
And banish'd into mystery, and the
pain
Of this divisible-indivisible world
Among the numerable-innumerable
Sun, sun, and sun, thro' finite-infinite
space
In finite-infinite Time—our mortal
veil
And shatter'd phantom of that infinite
One,
Who made thee unconceivably Thy-
self
Out of His whole World-self and all
in all—
Live thou! and of the grain and husk,
the grape
And ivy-berry, choose; and still de-
part
From death to death thro' life and
life, and find
Nearer and ever nearer Him, who
wrought
Not matter, nor the finite-infinite,
But this main-miracle, that thou art
thou,
With power on thine own act and on
the world.

THE HUMAN CRY

I

HALLOWED be Thy name—Hallelu-
iah!—
Infinite Ideality!
Immeasurable Reality!
Infinite Personality!
Hallowed be Thy name—Halleluiah!

II

We feel we are nothing—for all is
Thou and in Thee;
We feel we are something—that also
has come from Thee;
We know we are nothing—but Thou
wilt help us to be.
Hallowed be Thy name--Halleluiah!

SONNETS

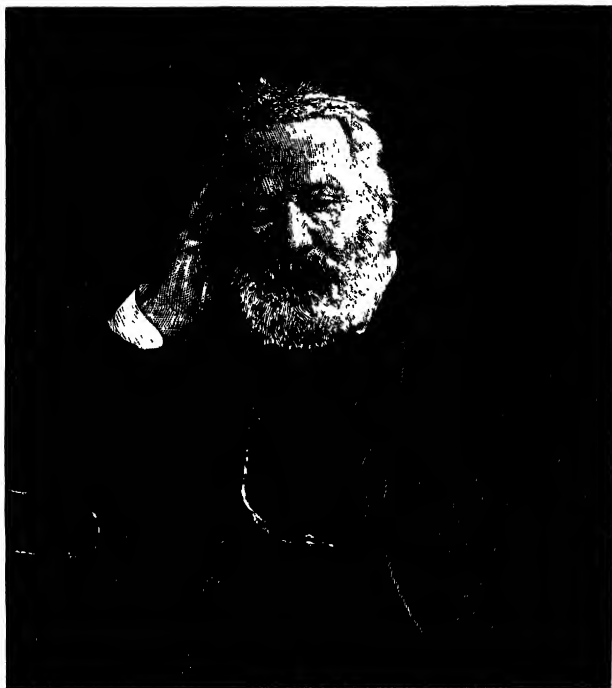
PREFATORY SONNET

TO 'THE NINETEENTH CENTURY'

THOSE that of late had fled far and
fast
To touch all shores, now leaving to
the skill
Of others their old craft seaworthy
still,
Have charter'd this; where, mindful
of the past,
Our true co-mates regather round the
mast;
Of diverse tongue, but with a com-
mon will
Here, in this roaring moon of daffodil
And crocus, to put forth and brave
the blast.
For some, descending from the sacred
peak
Of hoar high-templed Faith, have
leagued again
Their lot with ours to rove the world
about;
And some are wilder comrades, sworn
to seek
If any golden harbor be for men
In seas of Death and sunless gulfs of
Doubt.

TO THE REV. W. H. BROOKFIELD

BROOKS, for they call'd you so that
knew you best,
Old Brooks, who loved so well to
mouth my rhymes,
How oft we two have heard Saint
Mary's chimes!
How oft the Cantab supper, host and
guest,
Would echo helpless laughter to your
jest!
How oft with him we paced that walk
of limes,
Him, the lost light of those dawn-
golden times,
Who loved you well! Now both are
gone to rest.
You man of humorous-melancholy
mark,
Dead of some inward agony—is it so?
Our kindlier, trustier Jaques, past
away!



VICTOR HUGO

I cannot laud this life, it looks so dark:

Διὸς ὕπαρ—dream of a shadow, go—
God bless you! I shall join you in a day.

MONTENEGRO

THEY rose to where their sovran eagle
sails,
They kept their faith, their freedom,
on the height,
Chaste, frugal, savage, arm'd by day
and night
Against the Turk; whose inroad no-
where scales
Their headlong passes, but his foot-
step fails,
And red with blood the Crescent reels
from fight
Before their dauntless hundreds, in
prone flight

By thousands down the crags and thro
the vales.

O smallest among peoples! rough
rock-throne

Of Freedom! warriors beating back
the swarm

Of Turkish Islam for five hundred
years,

Great Tsernogora! never since thine
own

Black ridges drew the cloud and brake
the storm

Has breathed a race of mightier moun-
taineers.

TO VICTOR HUGO

VICTOR in Drama, Victor in Romance,
Cloud-weaver of phantasmal hopes
and fears,
French of the French, and Lord of
human tears;

Child-lover; Bard whose fame-lit
laurels glance
Darkening the wreaths of all that
would advance,
Beyond our strait, their claim to be
thy peers;
Weird Titan by thy winter weight of
years
As yet unbroken, stormy voice of
France!
Who dost not love our England—so
they say;
I know not—England, France, all
man to be
Will make one people ere man's race
be run:
And I, desiring that diviner day,
Yield thee full thanks for thy full
courtesy
To younger England in the boy my
son.

TRANSLATIONS, ETC.

BATTLE OF BRUNANBURH

I

¹ ATHELSTAN King,
Lord among Earls,
Bracelet-bestower and
Baron of Barons,
He with his brother,
Edmund Atheling,
Gaining a lifelong
Glory in battle,
Slew with the sword-edge
There by Brunanburh,
Brake the shield-wall,
Hew'd the linden-wood,²
Hack'd the battle-shield,
Sons of Edward with hammer'd brands.

II

Theirs was a greatness
Got from their grandsires—
Theirs that so often in
Strife with their enemies
Struck for their hoards and their
hearths and their homes.

¹ I have more or less availed myself of my son's prose translation of this poem in the 'Contemporary Review' (November, 1876).

² Shields of lindenwood.

III

Bow'd the spoiler,
Bent the Scotsman,
Fell the ship-crews
Doom'd to the death.
All the field with blood of the fighters
Flow'd, from when first the
great
Sun-star of morning-tide,
Lamp of the Lord God
Lord everlasting,
Glode over earth till the glorious crea-
ture
Sank to his setting.

IV

There lay many a man
Marr'd by the javelin,
Men of the Northland
Shot over shield.
There was the Scotsman
Weary of war.

V

We the West-Saxons,
Long as the daylight
Lasted, in companies
Troubled the track of the host that we
hated;
Grimly with swords that were sharp
from the grindstone,
Fiercely we hack'd at the flyers before
us.

VI

Mighty the Mercian,
Hard was his hand-play,
Sparing not any of
Those that with Anlaf,
Warriors over the
Weltering waters
Borne in the bark's bosom,
Drew to this island—
Doom'd to the death.

VII

Five young kings put asleep by the
swordstroke,
Seven strong earls of the army of
Anlaf
Fell on the war-field, numberless num-
bers,
Shipmen and Scotsmen.

VIII

Then the Norse leader —
 Dire was his need of it,
 Few were his following —
 Fleed to his war-ship ;
 Fleeted his vessel to sea with the king
 in it,
 Saving his life on the fallow flood.

IX

Also the crafty one,
 Constantinus,
 Crept to his North again,
 Hoar-headed hero !

X

Slender warrant had
 He to be proud of
 The welcome of war-knives —
 He that was reft of his
 Folk and his friends that had
 Fallen in conflict,
 Leaving his son too
 Lost in the carnage,
 Mangled to morsels,
 A youngster in war !

XI

Slender reason had
 He to be glad of
 The clash of the war-glaive —
 Traitor and trickster
 And spurner of treaties —
 He nor had Anlaf
 With armies so broken
 A reason for bragging
 That they had the better
 In perils of battle
 On places of slaughter —
 The struggle of standards,
 The rush of the javelins,
 The crash of the charges,¹
 The wielding of weapons —
 The play that they play'd with
 The children of Edward.

XII

Then with their nail'd prows
 Parted the Norsemen, a
 Blood-redden'd relic of
 Javelins over
 The jarring breaker, the deep-sea billow,

¹ Lit. 'the gathering of men.'

Shaping their way toward Dyflen¹
 again,
 Shamed in their souls.

XIII

Also the brethren,
 King and Atheling,
 Each in his glory,
 Went to his own in his own West-
 Saxonland,
 Glad of the war.

XIV

Many a carcase they left to be carrion,
 Many a livid one, many a sallow-skin —
 Left for the white-tail'd eagle to tear
 it, and
 Left for the horny-nibb'd raven to
 rend it, and
 Gave to the garbaging war-hawk to
 gorge it, and
 That gray beast, the wolf of the
 weald.

XV

Never had huger
 Slaughter of heroes
 Slain by the sword-edge —
 Such as old writers
 Have writ of in histories —
 Hapt in this isle, since
 Up from the East hither
 Saxon and Angle from
 Over the broad billow
 Broke into Britain with
 Haughty war-workers who
 Harried the Welshman, when
 Earls that were lured by the
 Hunger of glory gat
 Hold of the land.

ACHILLES OVER THE TRENCH

[ILLIAD, XVIII. 202]

So saying, light-foot Iris pass'd away.
 Then rose Achilles dear to Zeus ; and
 round
 The warrior's puissant shoulders Pal-
 las flung
 Her fringed ægis, and around his head
 The glorious goddess wreath'd a golden
 cloud,

¹ Dublin.



DANTE ALIGHIERI

And from it lighted an all-shining
 flame.
 As when a smoke from a city goes to
 heaven
 Far off from out an island girl 'by
 foes,
 All day the men contend in grievous
 war
 From their own city, but with set of
 sun
 Their fires flame thickly, and aloft the
 glare
 Flies streaming, if perchance the
 neighbors round
 May see, and sail to help them in the
 war;
 So from his head the splendor went to
 heaven.

From wall to dyke he stept, he stood,
 nor join'd
 The Achæans — honoring his wise mo-
 ther's word —
 There standing, shouted, and Pallas
 far away
 Call'd; and a boundless panic shook
 the foe.
 For like the clear voice when a trum-
 pet shrills,
 Blown by the fierce beleaguers of a
 town,
 So rang the clear voice of Æakidēs;
 And when the brazen cry of Æakidēs
 Was heard among the Trojans, all
 their hearts
 Were troubled, and the full-maned
 horses whirl'd

The chariots backward, knowing
 griefs at hand ;
 And sheer-astounded were the char-
 ioteers
 To see the dread, unweariable fire
 That always o'er the great Peleion's
 head
 Burn'd, for the bright-eyed goddess
 made it burn.
 Thrice from the dyke he sent his
 mighty shout,
 Thrice backward reel'd the Trojans
 and allies ;
 And there and then twelve of their
 noblest died
 Among their spears and chariots.

TO PRINCESS FREDERICA ON HER MARRIAGE

O you that were eyes and light to the
 King till he past away
 From the darkness of life —
 He saw not his daughter — he blest
 her : the blind King sees you
 to-day,
 He blesses the wife.

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN

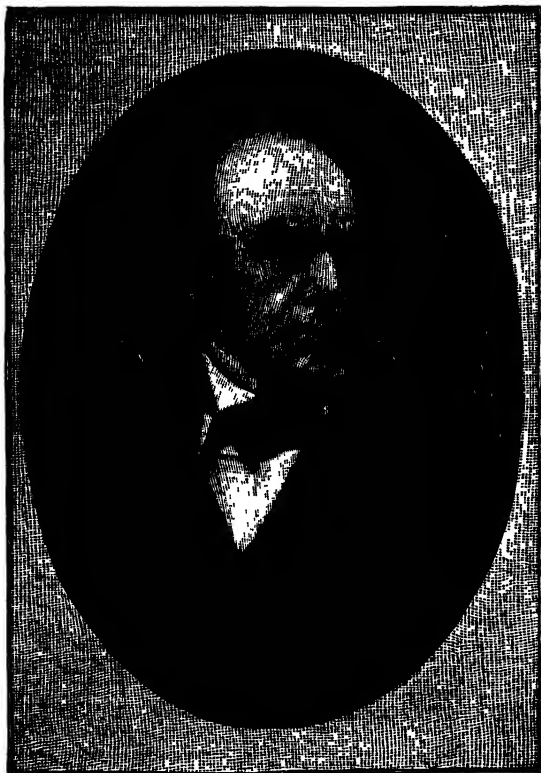
ON THE CENOTAPH IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Not here! the white North has thy
 bones ; and thou,
 Heroic sailor-soul,
 Art passing on thine happier voyage
 now
 Toward no earthly pole.

TO DANTE

(WRITTEN AT REQUEST OF THE FLOR-
 ENTINES)

King, that hast reign'd six hundred
 years, and grown
 In power, and ever growest, since
 thine own
 Fair Florence honoring thy nativity,
 Thy Florence now the crown of Italy.
 Hath sought the tribute of a verse
 from me,
 I, wearing but the garland of a day,
 Cast at thy feet one flower that fades
 away.



EDWARD FITZGERALD

TIRESIAS AND OTHER POEMS

DEDICATION

TO MY GOOD FRIEND

ROBERT BROWNING

WHOSE GENIUS AND GENIALITY WILL BEST APPRECIATE WHAT MAY BE BEST
AND MAKE MOST ALLOWANCE FOR WHAT MAY BE WORST, THIS VOLUME IS
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

TO E. FITZGERALD

OLD FITZ, who from your suburb
grange,

Where once I tarried for a while,
Glance at the wheeling orb of change,
And greet it with a kindly smile :

Whom yet I see as there you sit
Beneath your sheltering garden-tree,
And watch your doves about you flit,
And plant on shoulder, hand, and
knee,
Or on your head their rosy feet,
As if they knew your diet spares

Whatever moved in that full sheet
 Let down to Peter at his prayers ;
 Who live on milk and meal and grass ;
 And once for ten long weeks I tried
 Your table of Pythagoras,
 And seem'd at first 'a thing enskied,'
 As Shakespeare has it, airy-light
 To float above the ways of men,
 Then fell from that half-spiritual
 height
 Chill'd, till I tasted flesh again
 One night when earth was winter-
 black,
 And all the heavens flash'd in frost ;
 And on me, half-asleep, came back
 That wholesome heat the blood had
 lost,
 And set me climbing icy capes
 And glaciers, over which there
 roll'd
 To meet me long-arm'd vines with
 grapes
 Of Eshcol hugeness ; for the cold
 Without, and warmth within me,
 wrought
 To mould the dream ; but none can
 say
 That Lenten fare makes Lenten
 thought
 Who reads your golden Eastern
 lay,
 Than which I know no version done
 In English more divinely well ;
 A planet equal to the sun
 Which cast it, that large infidel
 Your Omar ; and your Omar drew
 Full-handed plaudits from our best
 In modern letters, and from two,
 Old friends outvaluing all the rest,
 Two voices heard on earth no more ;
 But we old friends are still alive,
 And I am nearing seventy-four,
 While you have touch'd at seventy-
 five,
 And, so I send a birthday line
 Of greeting ; and my son, who dipt
 In some forgotten book of mine
 With sallow scraps of manuscript,
 And dating many a year ago,
 Has hit on this, which you will take,
 My Fitz, and welcome, as I know,
 Less for its own than for the sake
 Of one recalling gracious times,
 When, in our younger London days,
 You found some merit in my rhymes,
 And I more pleasure in your praise.

TIRESIAS

I WISH I were as in the days of old,
 While yet the blessed daylight made
 itself
 Ruddy thro' both the roofs of sight,
 and woke
 These eyes, now dull, but then so keen
 to seek
 The meanings ambush'd under all they
 saw,
 The flight of birds, the flame of sacri-
 fice,
 What omens may foreshadow fate to
 man
 And woman, and the secret of the
 Gods.
 My son, the Gods, despite of human
 prayer,
 Are slower to forgive than human
 kings.
 The great God Ares burns in anger
 still
 Against the guiltless heirs of him from
 Tyre,
 Our Cadmus, out of whom thou art,
 who found
 Beside the springs of Dirce, smote, and
 still'd
 Thro' all its folds the multitudinous
 beast,
 The dragon, which our trembling fa-
 thers call'd
 The God's own son.
 A tale, that told to me,
 When but thine age, by age as win-
 ter-white
 As mine is now, amazed, but made me
 yearn
 For larger glimpses of that more than
 man
 Which rolls the heavens, and lifts and
 lays the deep,
 Yet loves and hates with mortal hates
 and loves,
 And moves unseen among the ways
 of men.
 Then, in my wanderings all the
 lands that lie
 Subjected to the Heliconian ridge
 Have heard this footstep fall, altho'
 my wont
 Was more to scale the highest of the
 heights
 With some strange hope to see the
 nearer God.

One naked peak — the sister of the Sun
 Would climb from out the dark, and
 linger there³⁰
 To silver all the valleys with her
 shafts —
 There once, but long ago, five-fold thy
 term
 Of years, I lay; the winds were dead
 for heat;
 The noonday crag made the hand
 burn; and sick
 For shadow — not one bush was near
 — I rose,
 Following a torrent till its myriad falls
 Found silence in the hollows under-
 neath.

There in a secret olive-glade I saw
 Pallas Athene climbing from the bath
 In anger; yet one glittering foot dis-
 turb'd⁴⁰
 The lucid well; one snowy knee was
 prest
 Against the margin flowers; a dread-
 ful light
 Came from her golden hair, her golden
 helm
 And all her golden armor on the grass,
 And from her virgin breast, and vir-
 gin eyes
 Remaining fixt on mine, till mine grew
 dark
 For ever, and I heard a voice that
 said,
 'Henceforth be blind, for thou hast
 seen too much,
 And speak the truth that no man may
 believe.'

Son, in the hidden world of sight
 that lives⁵⁰
 Behind this darkness, I behold her
 still,
 Beyond all work of those who carve
 the stone,
 Beyond all dreams of Godlike woman-
 hood,
 Ineffable beauty, out of whom, at a
 glance,
 And as it were, perforce, upon me
 flash'd
 The power of prophesying — but to
 me
 No power — so chain'd and coupled
 with the curse
 Of blindness and their unbelief who
 heard

And heard not, when I spake of fa-
 mine, plague,
 Shrine-shattering earthquake, fire,
 flood, thunderbolt,⁶⁰
 And angers of the Gods for evil done
 And expiation lack'd — no power on
 Fate

Theirs, or mine own! for when the
 crowd would roar

For blood, for war, whose issue was
 their doom,

To cast wise words among the multi-
 tude

Was flinging fruit to lions; nor, in
 hours

Of civil outbreak, when I knew the
 twain

Would each waste each, and bring on
 both the yoke

Of stronger states, was mine the voice
 to curb

The madness of our cities and their
 kings.

Who ever turn'd upon his heel to
 hear⁷⁰

My warning that the tyranny of one
 Was prelude to the tyranny of all?

My counsel that the tyranny of all
 Led backward to the tyranny of one?

This power hath work'd no good to
 aught that lives,

And these blind hands were useless in
 their wars.

O, therefore, that the unfulfill'd de-
 sire,

The grief for ever born from griefs to
 be,

The boundless yearning of the pro-
 phet's heart —⁸⁰

Could *that* stand forth, and like a
 statue, rear'd

To some great citizen, win all praise
 from all

Who past it, saying, 'That was he!'
 In vain!

Virtue must shape itself in deed, and
 those

Whom weakness or necessity have
 cramp'd

Within themselves, immersing, each,
 his urn

In his own well, draws solace as he
 may.

Meneceus, thou hast eyes, and I can
 hear

Too plainly what full tides of onset sap

Our seven high gates, and what a
 weight of war⁹⁰
 Rides on those ringing axles ! jingle
 of bits,
 Shouts, arrows, tramp of the horn-
 footed horse
 That grind the glebe to powder ! Stony
 showers
 Of that ear-stunning hail of Arès crash
 Along the sounding walls. Above, be-
 low,
 Shock after shock, the song-built
 towers and gates
 Reel, bruised and butted with the
 shuddering
 War-thunder of iron rams ; and from
 within
 The city comes a murmur void of joy,
 Lest she be taken captive — maidens,
 wives,¹⁰⁰
 And mothers with their babblers of
 the dawn,
 And oldest age in shadow from the
 night,
 Falling about their shrines before their
 Gods,
 And wailing, ' Save us.'
 And they wail to thee !
 These eyeless eyes, that cannot see
 thine own,
 See this, that only in thy virtue lies
 The saving of our Thebes ; for, yes-
 ternight,
 To me, the great God Arès, whose one
 bliss
 Is war and human sacrifice — himself
 Blood-red from battle, spear and hel-
 met tipt¹¹⁰
 With stormy light as on a mast at
 sea,
 Stood out before a darkness, crying,
 ' Thebes,
 Thy Thebes shall fall and perish, for I
 loathe
 The seed of Cadmus — yet if one of
 these
 By his own hand — if one of these —'
 My son,
 No sound is breathed so potent to co-
 erce,
 And to conciliate, as their names who
 dare
 For that sweet mother land which
 gave them birth
 Nobly to do, nobly to die. Their
 names,

Graven on memorial columns, are a
 song¹²⁰
 Heard in the future ; few, but more
 than wall
 And rampart, their examples reach a
 hand
 Far thro' all years, and everywhere
 they meet
 And kindle generous purpose, and the
 strength
 To mould it into action pure as theirs.
 Fairer thy fate than mine, if life's
 best end
 Be to end well ! and thou refusing
 this,
 Unvenerable will thy memory be
 While men shall move the lips ; but if
 thou dare —
 Thou, one of these, the race of Cad-
 mus — then¹³⁰
 No stone is fitted in yon marble girth
 Whose echo shall not tongue thy glo-
 rious doom,
 Nor in this pavement but shall ring
 thy name
 To every hoof that clangs it, and the
 springs
 Of Dircè laving yonder battle-plain,
 Heard from the roofs by night, will
 murmur thee
 To thine own Thebes, while Thebes
 thro' thee shall stand
 Firm-based with all her Gods.
 The Dragon's cave
 Half hid, they tell me, now in flowing
 vines —
 Where once he dwelt and whence he
 roll'd himself¹⁴⁰
 At dead of night — thou knowest, and
 that smooth rock
 Before it, altar-fashion'd, where of
 late
 The woman-breasted Sphinx, with
 wings drawn back,
 Folded her lion paws, and look'd to
 Thebes.
 There blanch the bones of whom she
 slew, and these
 Mixt with her own, because the fierce
 beast found
 A wiser than herself, and dash'd her-
 self
 Dead in her rage ; but thou art wise
 enough,
 Tho' young, to love thy wiser, blunt
 the curse

Of Pallas, hear, and tho' I speak the
truth¹⁵⁰
Believe I speak it, let thine own hand
strike
Thy youthful pulses into rest and
quench
The red God's anger, fearing not to
plunge
Thy torch of life in darkness, rather
— thou
Rejoicing that the sun, the moon, the
stars
Send no such light upon the ways of
men
As one great deed.

Thither, my son, and there
Thou, that hast never known the em-
brace of love,
Offer thy maiden life.

This useless hand!
I felt one warm tear fall upon it.
Gone!¹⁶⁰
He will achieve his greatness.

But for me,
I would that I were gather'd to my
rest,
And mingled with the famous kings
of old,
On whom about their ocean-islets flash
The faces of the Gods—the wise
man's word,
Here trampled by the populace under-
foot,
There crown'd with worship—and
these eyes will find
The men I knew, and watch the char-
iot whirl
About the goal again, and hunters
race

The shadowy lion, and the warrior-
kings,¹⁷⁰
In height and prowess more than hu-
man, strive
Again for glory, while the golden lyre
Is ever sounding in heroic ears
Heroic hymns, and every way the
vales
Wind, clouded with the grateful in-
cense-fume
Of those who mix all odor to the Gods
On one far height in one far-shining
fire.

One height and one far-shining fire!
And while I fancied that my friend

For this brief idyll would require¹⁸⁰
A less diffuse and opulent end,
And would defend his judgment well,
If I should deem it over nice—
The tolling of his funeral bell
Broke on my Pagan Paradise,
And mixt the dream of classic times,
And all the phantoms of the dream,
With present grief, and made the
rhymes,
That miss'd his living welcome, seem
Like would-be guests an hour too late,
Who down the highway moving
on
With easy laughter find the gate¹⁹⁰
Is bolted, and the master gone.
Gone into darkness, that full light
Of friendship! past, in sleep, away
By night, into the deeper night!
The deeper night? A clearer day
Than our poor twilight dawn on
earth—

If night, what barren toil to be!
What life, so maim'd by night, were
worth²⁰⁰
Our living out? Not mine to me
Remembering all the golden hours
Now silent, and so many dead,
And him the last; and laying flowers,
This wreath, above his honor'd head,
And praying that, when I from hence
Shall fade with him into the un-
known,
My close of earth's experience
May prove as peaceful as his own.

THE WRECK

I

HIDE me, mother! my fathers be
long'd to the church of old,
I am driven by storm and sin and
death to the ancient fold,
I cling to the Catholic Cross once
more, to the Faith that saves.
My brain is full of the crash of wrecks,
and the roar of waves,
My life itself is a wreck, I have sul-
lied a noble name,
I am flung from the rushing tide of
the world as a waif of shame,
I am roused by the wail of a child,
and awake to a livid light,
And a ghastlier face than ever has
haunted a grave by night.

I would hide from the storm without,
 I would flee from the storm
 within,
 I would make my life one prayer for
 a soul that died in his sin, 10
 I was the tempter, mother, and mine
 was the deeper fall;
 I will sit at your feet, I will hide my
 face, I will tell you all.

II

He that they gave me to, mother, a
 heedless and innocent bride —
 I never have wrong'd his heart, I
 have only wounded his pride —
 Spain in his blood and the Jew — dark-
 visaged, stately and tall —
 A princelier-looking man never stept
 thro' a prince's hall.
 And who, when his anger was kin-
 dled, would venture to give
 him the nay?
 And a man men fear is a man to be
 loved by the women, they say.
 And I could have loved him too, if the
 blossom can dote on the blight,
 Or the young green leaf rejoice in the
 frost that sears it at night; 20
 He would open the books that I prized,
 and toss them away with a yawn,
 Repell'd by the magnet of Art to the
 which my nature was drawn,
 The word of the Poet by whom the
 deeps of the world are stirr'd,
 The music that robes it in language
 beneath and beyond the word!
 My Shelley would fall from my hands
 when he cast a contemptuous
 glance
 From where he was poring over his
 Tables of Trade and Finance;
 My hands, when I heard him coming,
 would drop from the chords or
 the keys,
 But ever I fail'd to please him, how-
 ever I strove to please —
 All day long far-off in the cloud of the
 city, and there 29
 Lost, head and heart, in the chances
 of dividend, consol, and share —
 And at home if I sought for a kindly
 caress, being woman and weak,
 His formal kiss fell chill as a flake of
 snow on the cheek.
 And so, when I bore him a girl, when
 I held it aloft in my joy,

He look'd at it coldly, and said to me,
 'Pity it isn't a boy.'
 The one thing given me, to love and
 to live for, glanced at in scorn!
 The child that I felt I could die for —
 as if she were basely born!
 I had lived a wild-flower life, I was
 planted now in a tomb;
 The daisy will shut to the shadow, I
 closed my heart to the gloom;
 I threw myself all abroad — I would
 play my part with the young
 By the low foot-lights of the world —
 and I caught the wreath that
 was flung. 40

III

Mother, I have not — however their
 tongues may have babbled of
 me —
 Sinn'd thro' an animal vileness, for all
 but a dwarf was he,
 And all but a hunchback too; and I
 look'd at him, first, askance,
 With pity — not he the knight for an
 amorous girl's romance!
 Tho' wealthy enough to have bask'd
 in the light of a dowerless
 smile,
 Having lands at home and abroad in a
 rich West-Indian isle;
 But I came on him once at a ball, the
 heart of a listening crowd —
 Why, what a brow was there! he was
 seated — speaking aloud
 To women, the flower of the time, and
 men at the helm of state —
 Flowing with easy greatness and
 touching on all things great, 50
 Science, philosophy, song — till I felt
 myself ready to weep
 For I knew not what, when I heard
 that voice, — as mellow and deep
 As a psalm by a mighty master and
 peal'd from an organ, — roll
 Rising and falling — for, mother, the
 voice was the voice of the soul;
 And the sun of the soul made day in
 the dark of his wonderful eyes.
 Here was the hand that would help
 me, would heal me — the heart
 that was wise!
 And he, poor man, when he learnt that
 I hated the ring I wore,
 He helpt me with death, and he heal'd
 me with sorrow for evermore.

IV

For I broke the bond. That day my
 nurse had brought me the child.
 The small sweet face was flush'd, but
 it coo'd to the mother and
 smiled. ⁶⁰
 'Anything ailing,' I ask'd her, 'with
 baby?' She shook her head,
 And the motherless mother kiss'd it,
 and turn'd in her haste and fled.

V

Low warm winds had gently breathed
 us away from the land—
 Ten long sweet summer days upon
 deck, sitting hand in hand—
 When he clothed a naked mind with
 the wisdom and wealth of his
 own,
 And I bow'd myself down as a slave
 to his intellectual throne,
 When he coin'd into English gold
 some treasure of classical song,
 When he flouted a statesman's error,
 or flamed at a public wrong,
 When he rose as it were on the wings
 of an eagle beyond me, and
 past
 Over the range and the change of the
 world from the first to the
 last, ⁷⁰
 When he spoke of his tropical home in
 the canes by the purple tide,
 And the high star-crowns of his palms
 on the deep-wooded mountain-
 side,
 And cliffs all robed in lianas that
 dropt to the brink of his bay,
 And trees like the towers of a minster,
 the sons of a winterless day.
 'Paradise there!' so he said, but I
 seem'd in Paradise then
 With the first great love I had felt for
 the first and greatest of men;
 Ten long days of summer and sin—if
 it must be so—
 But days of a larger light than I ever
 again shall know—
 Days that will glimmer, I fear, thro'
 life to my latest breath;
 'No frost there,' so he said, 'as in tru-
 est love no death.' ⁸⁰

VI

Mother, one morning a bird with a
 warble plaintively sweet

Perch'd on the shrouds, and then fell
 fluttering down at my feet;
 I took it, he made it a cage, we
 fondled it, Stephen and I,
 But it died, and I thought of the child
 for a moment, I scarce know
 why.

VII

But if sin be sin, not inherited fate, as
 many will say,
 My sin to my desolate little one found
 me at sea on a day,
 When her orphan wail came borne in
 the shriek of a growing wind,
 And a voice rang out in the thunders
 of ocean and heaven, 'Thou
 hast sinn'd.'
 And down in the cabin were we, for
 the towering crest of the tides
 Plunged on the vessel and swept in a
 cataract off from her sides, ⁹⁰
 And ever the great storm grew with a
 howl and a hoot of the blast
 In the rigging, voices of hell—then
 came the crash of the mast.
 'The wages of sin is death,' and there
 I began to weep,
 'I am the Jonah, the crew should cast
 me into the deep,
 For, ah, God! what a heart was mine
 to forsake her even for you!'
 'Never the heart among women,' he
 said, 'more tender and true.'
 'The heart! not a mother's heart,
 when I left my darling alone.'
 'Comfort yourself, for the heart of
 the father will care for his own.'
 'The heart of the father will spurn
 her,' I cried, 'for the sin of the
 wife,
 The cloud of the mother's shame will
 enfold her and darken her
 life.' ¹⁰⁰
 Then his pale face twitch'd. 'O Ste-
 phen, I love you, I love you,
 and yet'—
 As I lean'd away from his arms—
 'would God, we had never met!'
 And he spoke not—only the storm:
 till after a little, I yearn'd
 For his voice again, and he call'd to
 me, 'Kiss me!' and there—as
 I turn'd—
 'The heart, the heart!' I kiss'd him,
 I clung to the sinking form,

And the storm went roaring above us,
and he — was out of the storm.

VIII

And then, then, mother, the ship stagger'd under a thunderous shock,
That shook us asunder, as if she had struck and crash'd on a rock;
For a huge sea smote every soul from the decks of the Falcon but one;
All of them, all but the man that was lash'd to the helm had gone; ¹¹⁰
And I fell — and the storm and the days went by, but I knew no more —

Lost myself — lay like the dead by the dead on the cabin floor,
Dead to the death beside me, and lost to the loss that was mine,
With a dim dream, now and then, of a hand giving bread and wine,
Till I woke from the trance, and the ship stood still, and the skies were blue,
But the face I had known, O mother, was not the face that I knew.

IX

The strange misfeaturing mask that I saw so amazed me that I
Stumbled on deck, half mad. I would fling myself over and die!
But one — he was waving a flag — the one man left on the wreck —
'Woman,' — he graspt at my arm, — 'stay there!' — I crouch'd upon deck — ¹²⁰
'We are sinking, and yet there's hope: look yonder,' he cried, 'a sail!'
In a tone so rough that I broke into passionate tears, and the wail
Of a beaten babe, till I saw that a boat was nearing us — then
All on a sudden I thought, I shall look on the child again.

X

They lower'd me down the side, and there in the boat I lay
With sad eyes fixt on the lost seahome, as we glided away,
And I sigh'd as the low dark hull dipt under the smiling main.
'Had I stay'd with him, I had now — with him — been out of my pain.'

XI

They took us aboard. The crew were gentle, the captain kind,
But I was the lonely slave of an often-wandering mind; ¹³⁰
For whenever a rougher gust might tumble a stormier wave,
'O Stephen,' I moan'd, 'I am coming to thee in thine ocean-grave.'
And again, when a balmier breeze curl'd over a peacefuller sea,
I found myself moaning again, 'O child, I am coming to thee.'

XII

The broad white brow of the isle — that bay with the color'd sand —
Rich was the rose of sunset there, as we drew to the land;
All so quiet the ripple would hardly blanch into spray
At the feet of the cliff; and I pray'd — 'My child,' — for I still could pray, —
'May her life be as blissfully calm, be never gloom'd by the curse ¹³⁰
Of a sin, not hers!'
Was it well with the child?

I wrote to the nurse
Who had borne my flower on her hireling heart; and an answer came
Not from the nurse — nor yet to the wife — to her maiden name!
I shook as I open'd the letter — I knew that hand too well —
And from it a scrap, clipt out of the 'deaths' in a paper, fell.
'Ten long sweet summer days' of fever, and want of care!
And gone — that day of the storm — O mother, she came to me there!

DESPAIR

I

Is it you, that preach'd in the chapel there looking over the sand?
Follow'd us too that night, and dogg'd us, and drew me to land?

II

What did I feel that night? You are curious. How should I tell?
Does it matter so much what I felt?

You rescued me — yet — was it well
 That you came unwish'd for, uncall'd,
 between me and the deep and
 my doom,
 Three days since, three more dark days
 of the Godless gloom
 Of a life without sun, without health,
 without hope, without any de-
 light
 In anything here upon earth ? but, ah,
 God ! that night, that night
 When the rolling eyes of the light-
 house there on the fatal neck
 Of land running out into rock — they
 had saved many hundreds from
 wreck — ¹⁰
 Glared on our way toward death, I
 remember I thought, as we past,
 Does it matter how many they saved ?
 we are all of us wreck'd at
 last —
 'Do you fear ?' and there came thro'
 the roar of the breaker a whis-
 per, a breath,

'Fear ? am I not with you ? I am
 frightened at life, not death.'

III

And the suns of the limitless universe
 sparkled and shone in the sky,
 Flashing with fires as of God, but we
 knew that their light was a lie —
 Bright as with deathless hope — but,
 however they sparkled and
 shone,
 The dark little worlds running round
 them were worlds of woe like
 our own —
 No soul in the heaven above, no soul
 on the earth below,
 A fiery scroll written over with lamen-
 tation and woe. ²⁰

IV

See, we were nursed in the drear
 nightfold of your fatalist creed,
 And we turn'd to the growing dawn,
 we had hoped for a dawn in-
 deed,



'The lost sea-home'

When the light of a sun that was coming
would scatter the ghosts of the past,
And the cramping creeds that had
madden'd the peoples would
vanish at last,
And we broke away from the Christ,
our human brother and friend,
For He spoke, or it seem'd that He
spoke, of a hell without help,
without end.

V

Hoped for a dawn, and it came, but
the promise had faded away ;
We had past from a cheerless night to
the glare of a drearier day ;
He is only a cloud and a smoke who
was once a pillar of fire,
The guess of a worm in the dust and
the shadow of its desire —
Of a worm as it writhes in a world of
the weak trodden down by the
strong,
Of a dying worm in a world, all mas-
sacre, murder, and wrong.

VI

O, we poor orphans of nothing —
alone on that lonely shore —
Born of the brainless Nature who knew
not that which she bore !
Trusting no longer that earthly flower
would be heavenly fruit —
Come from the brute, poor souls — no
souls — and to die with the
brute —

VII

Nay, but I am not claiming your pity ;
I know you of old —
Small pity for those that have ranged
from the narrow warmth of
your fold,
Where you bawl'd the dark side of
your faith and a God of eternal
rage,
Till you flung us back on ourselves,
and the human heart, and the
Age.

VIII

But pity — the Pagan held it a vice
— was in her and in me,
Helpless, taking the place of the pity-
ing God that should be !

Pity for all that aches in the grasp of
an idiot power,
And pity for our own selves on an
earth that bore not a flower ;
Pity for all that suffers on land or in
air or the deep,
And pity for our own selves till we
long'd for eternal sleep.

IX

'Lightly step over the sands ! the
waters — you hear them call !
Life with its anguish, and horrors, and
errors — away with it all !'
And she laid her hand in my own —
she was always loyal and
sweet —
Till the points of the foam in the
dusk came playing about our
feet.
There was a strong sea-current would
sweep us out to the main.
'Ah, God !' tho' I felt as I spoke I
was taking the name in vain —
'Ah, God !' and we turn'd to each
other, we kiss'd, we embraced,
she and I,
Knowing the love we were used to be-
lieve everlasting would die.
We had read their know-nothing
books, and we lean'd to the
darker side —
Ah, God, should we find Him, per-
haps, perhaps, if we died, if we
died ;
We never had found Him on earth,
this earth is a fatherless hell —
'Dear love, for ever and ever, for
ever and ever farewell !'
Never a cry so desolate, not since the
world began,
Never a kiss so sad, no, not since the
coming of man !

X

But the blind wave cast me ashore,
and you saved me, a valueless
life.
Not a grain of gratitude mine ! You
have parted the man from the
wife.
I am left alone on the land, she is all
alone in the sea ;
If a curse meant aught, I would
curse you for not having let
me be.

XI

Visions of youth—for my brain was
drunk with the water, it seems;
I had past into perfect quiet at length
out of pleasant dreams,
And the transient trouble of drown-
ing—what was it when match'd
with the pains
Of the hellish heat of a wretched life
rushing back thro' the veins?

XII

Why should I live? one son had
forged on his father and fled,
And if I believed in a God, I would
thank Him, the other is dead, ⁷⁰
And there was a baby-girl, that had
never look'd on the light;
Happiest she of us all, for she past
from the night to the night.

XIII

But the crime, if a crime, of her
eldest-born, her glory, her
boast,
Struck hard at the tender heart of the
mother, and broke it almost;
Tho', glory and shame dying out for
ever in endless time,
Does it matter so much whether
crown'd for a virtue, or hang'd
for a crime?

XIV

And ruin'd by *him*, by *him*, I stood
there, naked, amazed
In a world of arrogant opulence, fear'd
myself turning crazed,
And I would not be mock'd in a mad-
house! and she, the delicate
wife,
With a grief that could only be cured,
if cured, by the surgeon's
knife, — ⁸⁰

XV

Why should we bear with an hour of
torture, a moment of pain,
If every man die for ever, if all his
griefs are in vain,
And the homeless planet at length will
be wheel'd thro' the silence of
space,
Motherless evermore of an ever-vanish-
ing race,
When the worm shall have writhed its

last, and its last brother-worm
will have fled
From the dead fossil skull that is left
in the rocks of an earth that is
dead?

XVI

Have I crazed myself over their hor-
rible infidel writings? O, yes,
For these are the new dark ages, you
see, of the popular press,
When the bat comes out of his cave,
and the owls are whooping at
noon,
And Doubt is the lord of this dunghill
and crows to the sun and the
moon, ⁹⁰
Till the sun and the moon of our sci-
ence are both of them turn'd
into blood,
And Hope will have broken her heart,
running after a shadow of good;
For their knowing and know-nothing
books are scatter'd from hand to
hand—
We have knelt in your know-all chal-
pel too, looking over the sand.

XVII

What! I should call on that Infinite
Love that has served us so well?
Infinite cruelty rather that made ever-
lasting hell,
Made us, foreknew us, foredoom'd us,
and does what he will with his
own;
Better our dead brute mother who
never has heard us groan!

XVIII

Hell? if the souls of men were immor-
tal, as men have been told,
The lecher would cleave to his lusts,
and the miser would yearn for
his gold, ¹⁰⁰
And so there were hell for ever! but
were there a God, as you say,
His love would have power over hell
till it utterly vanish'd away.

XIX

Ah, yet—I have had some glimmer,
at times, in my gloomiest woe,
Of a God behind all—after all—the
great God, for aught that I
know;

But the God of love and of hell
together—they cannot be
thought,

If there be such a God, may the Great
God curse him and bring him to
nought!

XX

Blasphemy! whose is the fault? is it
mine? for why would you save
A madman to vex you with wretched
words, who is best in his grave?

Blasphemy! ay, why not, being
damn'd beyond hope of grace?

O, would I were yonder with her, and
away from your faith and your
face!

Blasphemy! true! I have scared you
pale with my scandalous talk,

But the blasphemy to *my* mind lies all
in the way that you walk.

XXI

Hence! she is gone! can I stay? can
I breathe divorced from the
past?

You needs must have good lynx-eyes
if I do not escape you at last.

Our orthodox coroner doubtless will
find it a *felo-de-se*,

And the stake and the cross-road, fool,
if you will, does it matter to
me?

THE ANCIENT SAGE

A THOUSAND summers ere the time of
Christ,

From out his ancient city came a Seer
Whom one that loved and honor'd
him, and yet

Was no disciple, richly garb'd, but
worn

From wasteful living, follow'd—in
his hand

A scroll of verse—till that old man
before

A cavern whence an affluent fountain
pour'd

From darkness into daylight, turn'd
and spoke:

'This wealth of waters might but
seem to draw

From yon dark cave, but, son, the
source is higher,

Yon summit half-a-league in air—and
higher

The cloud that hides it—higher still
the heavens

Whereby the cloud was moulded, and
whereout

The cloud descended. Force is from
the heights.

I am wearied of our city, son, and go
To spend my one last year among the
hills.

What hast thou there? Some death-
song for the Ghouls

To make their banquet relish? let me
read.

'“How far thro' all the bloom and brake
That nightingale is heard!

What power but the bird's could make
This music in the bird?

How summer-bright are yonder skies,
And earth as fair in hue!

And yet what sign of aught that lies
Behind the green and blue?

But man to-day is fancy's fool
As man hath ever been.

The nameless Power, or Powers, that rule
Were never heard or seen.”

If thou wouldst hear the Nameless,
and wilt dive

Into the temple-cave of thine own self,
There, brooding by the central altar,
thou

Mayst haply learn the Nameless hath
a voice,

By which thou wilt abide, if thou be
wise,

As if thou knewest, tho' thou canst
not know;

For Knowledge is the swallow on the
lake

That sees and stirs the surface-shadow
there

But never yet hath dipt into the
abysm,

The abysm of all abysms, beneath,
within

The blue of sky and sea, the green of
earth,

And in the million-millionth of a grain
Which cleft and cleft again for ever-

more,
And ever vanishing, never vanishes,

To me, my son, more mystic than my
self,

Or even than the Nameless is to me.

'And when thou sendest thy free
soul thro' heaven,
Nor understandest bound nor bound-
lessness,
Thou seest the Nameless of the hun-
dred names.

'And if the Nameless should with-
draw from all⁵⁰
Thy frailty counts most real, all thy
world
Might vanish like thy shadow in the
dark.

"And since—from when this earth be-
gan—
The Nameless never came
Among us, never spake with man,
And never named the Name"—

Thou canst not prove the Nameless,
O my son,
Nor canst thou prove the world thou
movest in,
Thou canst not prove that thou art
body alone,
Nor canst thou prove that thou art
spirit alone,⁶⁰
Nor canst thou prove that thou art
both in one.
Thou canst not prove thou art im-
mortal, no,
Nor yet that thou art mortal—nay,
my son,
Thou canst not prove that I, who
speak with thee,
Am not thyself in converse with thy-
self,
For nothing worthy proving can be
proven,
Nor yet disproven. Wherefore thou
be wise,
Cleave ever to the sunnier side of
doubt,
And cling to Faith beyond the forms
of Faith!
She reels not in the storm of warring
words,⁷⁰
She brightens at the clash of "Yes"
and "No,"
She sees the best that glimmers thro'
the worst,
She feels the sun is hid but for a night,
She spies the summer thro' the winter
bud,
She tastes the fruit before the blossom
falls,

She hears the lark within the songless
egg,
She finds the fountain where they
wait'd "Mirage!"

"What Power? aught akin to Mind,
The mind in me and you?
Or power as of the Gods gone blind⁸⁰
Who see not what they do?"

But some in yonder city hold, my
son,
That none but gods could build this
house of ours,
So beautiful, vast, various, so beyond
All work of man, yet, like all work
of man,
A beauty with defect—till That which
knows,
And is not known, but felt thro' what
we feel
Within ourselves is highest, shall de-
scend
On this half-deed, and shape it at the
last
According to the Highest in the High-
est.⁹⁰

"What Power but the Years that make
And break the vase of clay,
And stir the sleeping earth, and wake
The bloom that fades away?
What rulers but the Days and Hours
That cancel weal with woe,
And wind the front of youth with flowers,
And cap our age with snow?"

The days and hours are ever glancing
by,
And seem to flicker past thro' sun
and shade,¹⁰⁰
Or short, or long, as Pleasure leads,
or Pain,
But with the Nameless is nor day nor
hour;
Tho' we, thin minds, who creep from
thought to thought,
Break into "Thens" and "Whens"
the Eternal Now—
This double seeming of the single
world!—
My words are like the babblings in a
dream
Of nightmare, when the babblings
break the dream.
But thou be wise in this dream-world
of ours,

Nor take thy dial for thy deity,
But make the passing shadow serve
thy will. 110

"The years that made the stripling wise
Undo their work again,
And leave him, blind of heart and eyes,
The last and least of men;
Who clings to earth, and once would dare
Hell-heat or Arctic cold,
And now one breath of cooler air
Would loose him from his hold.
His winter chills him to the root,
He withers marrow and mind; 120
The kernel of the shrivell'd fruit
Is jutting thro' the rind;
The tiger spasms tear his chest,
The palsy wags his head;
The wife, the sons, who love him best
Would fain that he were dead;
The griefs by which he once was wrung
Were never worth the while" —

Who knows? or whether this earth-
narrow life
Be yet but yolk, and forming in the
shell? 130

"The shaft of scorn that once had stung
But wakes a dotard smile."

The placid gleam of sunset after storm!

"The statesman's brain that sway'd the
past
Is feebler than his knees;
The passive sailor wrecks at last
In ever-silent seas;
The warrior hath forgot his arms,
The learned all his lore;
The changing market frets or charms 140
The merchant's hope no more:
The prophet's beacon burn'd in vain,
And now is lost in cloud;
The plowman passes, bent with pain,
To mix with what he plow'd;
The poet whom his age would quote
As heir of endless fame —
He knows not even the book he wrote,
Not even his own name.
For man has overlived his day, 150
And, darkening in the light,
Scarce feels the senses break away
To mix with ancient Night."

The shell must break before the bird
can fly.

"The years that when my youth began
Had set the lily and rose
By all my ways where'er they ran,
Have ended mortal foes;

My rose of love for ever gone,
My lily of truth and trust — 160
They made her lily and rose in one,
And changed her into dust.
O rose-tree planted in my grief,
And growing on her tomb,
Her dust is greening in your leaf,
Her blood is in your bloom.
O slender lily waving there,
And laughing back the light,
In vain you tell me 'Earth is fair'
When all is dark as night." 170

My son, the world is dark with griefs
and graves,
So dark that men cry out against the
heavens.
Who knows but that the darkness is
in man?
The doors of Night may be the gates
of Light;
For wert thou born or blind or deaf,
and then
Suddenly heal'd, how wouldst thou
glory in all
The splendors and the voices of the
world!
And we, the poor earth's dying race,
and yet
No phantoms, watching from a phan-
tom shore
Await the last and largest sense to
make 180
The phantom walls of this illusion
fade,
And show us that the world is wholly
fair.

"But vain the tears for darken'd years
As laughter over wine,
And vain the laughter as the tears,
O brother, mine or thine,
For all that laugh, and all that weep
And all that breathe are one
Slight ripple on the boundless deep
That moves, and all is gone." 190

But that one ripple on the boundless
deep
Feels that the deep is boundless, and
itself
For ever changing form, but evermore
One with the boundless motion of the
deep.

"Yet wine and laughter, friends! and set
The lamps alight, and call
For golden music, and forget
The darkness of the pall."

If utter darkness closed the day, my
son —

But earth's dark forehead flings
athwart the heavens ²⁰⁰

Her shadow crown'd with stars — and
yonder — out

To northward — some that never set,
but pass

From sight and night to lose them-
selves in day.

I hate the black negation of the bier,
And wish the dead, as happier than
ourselves

And higher, having climb'd one step
beyond

Our village miseries, might be borne
in white

To burial or to burning, hymn'd from
hence

With songs in praise of death, and
crown'd with flowers!

"O worms and maggots of to-day ²¹⁰
Without their hope of wings!"

But louder than thy rhyme the silent
Word

Of that world-prophet in the heart of
man.

"Tho' some have gleams, or so they say,
Of more than mortal things."

To-day? but what of yesterday? for
oft

On me, when boy, there came what
then I call'd,

Who knew no books and no philoso-
phies,

In my boy-phrase, "The Passion of
the Past."

The first gray streak of earliest sum-
mer-dawn, ²²⁰

The last long strife of waning crimson
gloom,

As if the late and early were but one —
A height, a broken grange, a grove,
a flower

Had murmurs, "Lost and gone, and
lost and gone!"

A breath, a whisper — some divine
farewell —

Desolate sweetness — far and far
away —

What had he loved, what had he lost,
the boy?

I know not, and I speak of what has
been.

'And more, my son! for more than
once when I

Sat all alone, revolving in myself ²³⁰
The word that is the symbol of my-

self,
The mortal limit of the Self was

loosed,
And past into the Nameless, as a cloud

Melts into heaven. I touch'd my
limbs, the limbs

Were strange, not mine — and yet no
shade of doubt,

But utter clearness, and thro' loss of
self

The gain of such large life as match'd
with ours

Were sun to spark — unshadowable in
words,

Themselves but shadows of a shadow-
world.

"And idle gleams will come and go, ²⁴⁰
But still the clouds remain;"

The clouds themselves are children of
the Sun,

"And Night and Shadow rule below
When only Day should reign."

And Day and Night are children of
the Sun.

And idle gleams to thee are light to
me.

Some say, the Light was father of the
Night,

And some, the Night was father of
the Light,

No night, no day! — I touch thy
world again —

No ill, no good! — such counter-terms,
my son, ²⁵⁰

Are border-races, holding each its
own

By endless war. But night enough
is there

In yon dark city. Get thee back; and
since

The key to that weird casket, which
for thee

But holds a skull, is neither thine nor
mine,

But in the hand of what is more than
man,

Or in man's hand when man is more
 than man,
 Let be thy wail, and help thy fellow-
 men,
 And make thy gold thy vassal, not
 thy king,
 And fling free alms into the beggar's
 bowl,
 And send the day into the darken'd
 heart;
 Nor list for guerdon in the voice of
 men,
 A dying echo from a falling wall;
 Nor care — for Hunger hath the evil
 eye
 To vex the noon with fiery gems, or
 fold
 Thy presence in the silk of sumptuous
 looms;
 Nor roll thy viands on a luscious
 tongue,
 Nor drown thyself with flies in hon-
 eyed wine;
 Nor thou be rageful, like a handled
 bee,
 And lose thy life by usage of thy
 sting;
 Nor harm an adder thro' the lust for
 harm,
 Nor make a snail's horn shrink for
 wantonness,
 And more — think well ! Do-well will
 follow thought,
 And in the fatal sequence of this
 world
 An evil thought may soil thy children's
 blood;
 But curb the beast would cast thee in
 the mire,
 And leave the hot swamp of voluptu-
 ousness,
 A cloud between the Nameless and
 thyself,
 And lay thine uphill shoulder to the
 wheel,
 And climb the Mount of Blessing,
 whence, if thou
 Look higher, then — perchance — thou
 mayest — beyond
 A hundred ever-rising mountain lines,
 And past the range of Night and
 Shadow — see
 The high-heaven dawn of more than
 mortal day
 Strike on the Mount of Vision !
 So, farewell.'

THE FLIGHT

I

ARE you sleeping? have you forgot-
 ten? do not sleep, my sister
 dear!
 How *can* you sleep? the morning
 brings the day I hate and fear;
 The cock has crow'd already once, he
 crows before his time;
 Awake! the creeping glimmer steals,
 the hills are white with rime.

II

Ah, clasp me in your arms, sister, ah,
 fold me to your breast!
 Ah, let me weep my fill once more,
 and cry myself to rest!
 To rest? to rest and wake no more
 were better rest for me,
 Than to waken every morning to that
 face I loathe to see.

III

I envied your sweet slumber, all night
 so calm you lay;
 The night was calm, the morn is calm,
 and like another day;
 But I could wish yon moaning sea
 would rise and burst the shore,
 And such a whirlwind blow these
 woods as never blew before.

IV

For, one by one, the stars went down
 across the gleaming pane,
 And project after project rose, and all
 of them were vain;
 The blackthorn-blossom fades and falls
 and leaves the bitter sloe,
 The hope I catch at vanishes, and
 youth is turn'd to woe.

V

Come, speak a little comfort! all
 night I pray'd with tears,
 And yet no comfort came to me, and
 now the morn appears,
 When he will tear me from your side,
 who bought me for his slave;
 This father pays his debt with me,
 and weds me to my grave.

VI

What father, this or mine, was he,
 who, on that summer day

When I had fallen from off the crag
we clamber'd up in play,
Found, fear'd me dead, and groan'd,
and took and kiss'd me, and
again

He kiss'd me; and I loved him then;
he *was* my father then.

VII

No father now, the tyrant vassal of a
tyrant vice!

The godless Jephtha vows his child
. . . to one cast of the dice.

These ancient woods, this Hall at
last will go — perhaps have
gone,

Except his own meek daughter yield
her life, heart, soul to one —

VIII

To one who knows I scorn him. O,
the formal mocking bow,

The cruel smile, the courtly phrase
that masks his malice now — 30

But often in the sidelong eyes a gleam
of all things ill —

It is not Love but Hate that weds a
bride against her will;

IX

Hate, that would pluck from this
true breast the locket that I
wear,

The precious crystal into which I
braided Edwin's hair!

The love that keeps this heart alive
beats on it night and day —

One golden curl, his golden gift, be-
fore he past away.

X

He left us weeping in the woods; his
boat was on the sand;

How slowly down the rocks he went,
how loth to quit the land!

And all my life was darken'd, as I
saw the white sail run,

And darken, up that lane of light into
the setting sun. 40

XI

How often have we watch'd the sun
fade from us thro' the West,

And follow Edwin to those isles, those
Islands of the Blest!

Is *he* not there? would I were there,
the friend, the bride, the wife,
With him, where summer never dies,
with Love, the sun of life!

XII

O, would I were in Edwin's arms —
once more — to feel his breath

Upon my cheek — on Edwin's ship,
with Edwin, even in death,

Tho' all about the shuddering wreck
the death-white sea should rave,

Or if lip were laid to lip on the pillows
of the wave!

XIII

Shall I take *him*? I kneel with *him*?
I swear and swear forsworn

To love him most whom most I loathe,
to honor whom I scorn? 50

The Fiend would yell, the grave would
yawn, my mother's ghost would
rise —

To lie, to lie — in God's own house —
the blackest of all lies!

XIV

Why — rather than that hand in mine,
tho' every pulse would freeze,

I'd sooner fold an icy corpse dead of
some foul disease.

Wed him? I will not wed him, let
them spurn me from the doors,

And I will wander till I die about the
barren moors.

XV

The dear, mad bride who stabb'd
her bridegroom on her bridal
night —

If mad, then I am mad, but sane if she
were in the right.

My father's madness makes me mad —
but words are only words!

I am not mad, not yet, not quite —
There! listen how the birds 60

XVI

Begin to warble yonder in the budding
orchard trees!

The lark has past from earth to heaven
upon the morning breeze!

How gladly, were I one of those, how
early would I wake!

And yet the sorrow that I bear is sor-
row for *his* sake.

XVII

They love their mates, to whom they
sing; or else their songs, that
meet
The morning with such music, would
never be so sweet!
And tho' these fathers will not hear,
the blessed Heavens are just,
And Love is fire, and burns the feet
would trample it to dust.

XVIII

A door was open'd in the house —
who? who? my father sleeps!
A stealthy foot upon the stair! he —
some one — this way creeps! 70
If he? yes, he — lurks, listens, fears
his victim may have fled —
He! where is some sharp-pointed
thing? he comes, and finds me
dead.

XIX

Not he, not yet! and time to act —
but how my temples burn!
And idle fancies flutter me, I know
not where to turn;
Speak to me, sister, counsel me; this
marriage must not be.
You only know the love that makes
the world a world to me!

XX

Our gentle mother, had *she* lived —
but we were left alone.
That other left us to ourselves, he
cared not for his own;
So all the summer long we roam'd in
these wild woods of ours,
My Edwin loved to call us then 'his
two wild woodland flowers.' 80

XXI

Wild flowers blowing side by side in
God's free light and air.
Wild flowers of the secret woods,
when Edwin found us there,
Wild woods in which we roved with
him, and heard his passionate
vow,
Wild woods in which we rove no more,
if we be parted now!

XXII

You will not leave me thus in grief
to wander forth forlorn;

We never changed a bitter word, not
once since we were born;
Our dying mother join'd our hands;
she knew this father well;
She bade us love, like souls in heaven,
and now I fly from hell,

XXIII

And you with me; and we shall light
upon some lonely shore,
Some lodge within the waste sea-dunes,
and hear the waters roar, 90
And see the ships from out the West
go dipping thro' the foam,
And sunshine on that sail at last which
brings our Edwin home.

XXIV

But look, the morning grows apace,
and lights the old church-tower,
And lights the clock! the hand points
five — O, me! — it strikes the
hour —
I bide no more, I meet my fate, what-
ever ills betide!
Arise, my own true sister, come forth!
the world is wide.

XXV

And yet my heart is ill at ease, my
eyes are dim with dew,
I seem to see a new-dug grave up
yonder by the yew!
If we should never more return, but
wander hand in hand
With breaking hearts, without a
friend, and in a distant land! 100

XXVI

O sweet, they tell me that the world is
hard, and harsh of mind,
But can it be so hard, so harsh, as
those that should be kind?
That matters not. Let come what will;
at last the end is sure,
And every heart that loves with truth
is equal to endure.

TO-MORROW

I

HER, that yer Honor was spakin' to?
Whin, yer Honor? last year —
Standin' here be the bridge, when last
yer Honor was here?

An' yer Honor ye gev her the top of
the mornin', 'To-morra,' says
she.

What did they call her, yer Honor?
They call'd her Molly Magee.

An' yer Honor's the thrue ould blood
that always manes to be kind,
But there's rason in all things, yer
Honor, for Molly was out of her
mind.

II

Shure, an' meself remimbers wan night
comin' down be the sthrame,
An' it seems to me now like a bit of
yisterday in a dhrame —

Here where yer Honor seen her —
there was but a slip of a moon,
But I hard thim — Molly Magee wid
her bachelor, Danny O'Roon —¹⁰
'You've been takin' a dhrop o' the
crathur,' an' Danny says,
'Troth, an' I been

Dhrinkin' yer health wid Shamus
O'Shea at Katty's shebeen;¹

But I must be lavin' ye soon.'
'Ochone, are ye goin' away?'

'Goin' to cut the Sassenach whate,'
he says, 'over the say' —

'An' whin will ye meet me agin?' an'
I hard him, 'Molly asthore,

I'll meet you agin to morra,' says he,
'be the chapel-door.'

'An' whin are ye goin' to lave me?'
'O' Monday mornin',' says he;

'An' shure thin ye'll meet me to-
morra?' 'To-morra, to-morra,
machree!'

Thin Molly's ould mother, yer Honor,
that had no likin' for Dan,

Call'd from her cabin an' tould her to
come away from the man, ²⁰

An' Molly Magee kem flyin' acrass me,
as light as a lark,

An' Dan stood there for a minute, an'
thin wint into the dark.

But wirrah! the storm that night —
the tundher, an' rain that fell,

An' the sthrames runnin' down at the
back o' the glin 'ud 'a dhrownedd
hell.

III

But airth was at pace nixt mornin',
an' hiven in its glory smiled,

¹ Grog-shop.

As the Holy Mother o' Glory that
smiles at her sleepin' child —

Ethen — she stept an the chapel-green
an' she turn'd herself roun'

Wid a diamond dhrop in her eye, for
Danny was not to be foun',

An' many's the time that I watch'd
her at mass lettin' down the
tear,

For the divil a Danny was there, yer
Honor, for forty year. ³⁰

IV

Och, Molly Magee, wid the red o' the
rose an' the white o' the may,

An' yer hair as black as the night, an'
yer eyes as bright as the day!

Achora, yer laste little whisper was
sweet as the lilt of a bird!

Acushla, ye set me heart batin' to
music wid ivery word!

An' sorra the Queen wid her sceptre
in sich an illigant han',

An' the fall of yer foot in the dance
was as light as snow an the lan',

An' the sun kem out of a cloud whin-
iver ye waltk in the shstreet,

An' Shamus O'Shea was yer shadda,
an' laid himself undher yer feet,

An' I loved ye meself wid a heart an'
a half, me darlin', and he

'Ud 'a shot his own sowl dead for a
kiss of ye, Molly Magee. ⁴⁰

V

But shure we wor betther frinds whin
I crack'd his skull for her sake,

An' he ped me back wid the best he
could give at ould Donovan's
wake —

For the boys wor about her agin whin
Dan didn't come to the fore,

An' Shamus along wid the rest, but
she put thim all to the door.

An', afther, I thried her meself av the
bird 'ud come to me call,

But Molly, begorrah, 'ud listen to
naither at all, at all.

VI

An' her nabors an' frinds 'ud consowl
an' condowl wid her, airly an'
late,

'Your Danny,' they says, 'niver crasst
over say to the Sassenach
whate;

He's gone to the States, aroon, an'
 he's married another wife,
 An' ye'll niver set eyes an the face of
 the thraithur agin in life! ⁵⁰
 An' to dhrame of a married man, death
 alive, is a mortal sin.'
 But Molly says, 'I'd his hand-pro-
 mise, an' shure he'll meet me
 agin.'

VII

An' afther her paärints had inter'd
 glory, an' both in wan day,
 She began to spake to herself, the
 crathur, an' whisper, an' say,
 'To-morra, to-morra!' an' Father Mo-
 lowny he tuk her in han',
 'Molly, you're manin',' he says, 'me
 dear, av I undherstan',
 That ye'll meet your paärints agin
 an' yer Danny O'Roon afore God
 Wid his blessed Marthys an' Saints;'
 an' she gev him a friundly nod,
 'To-morra, to-morra,' she says, an' she
 did n't intind to desave,
 But her wits wor dead, an' her hair
 was as white as the snow an a
 grave. ⁶⁰

VIII

Arrah now, here last month they wor
 diggin' the bog, an' they foun'
 Dhrowned in black bog-wather a corp
 lyin' undher groun'.

IX

Yer Honor's own agint, he says to me
 wanst, at Katty's shebeen,
 'The devil take all the black lan', for
 a blessin' 'ud come wid the
 green!'
 An' where 'ud the poor man, thin, cut
 his bit o' turf for the fire?
 But och! had scan to the bogs whin
 they swallies the man intire!
 An' sorra the bog that's in hiven wid
 all the light an' the glow,
 An' there's hate enough, shure, wid-
 out *thim* in the devil's kitchen
 below.

X

Thim ould blind nagers in Agypt, I
 hard his Riverence say,
 Could keep their haithen kings in the
 flesh for the Jidgmint day, ⁷⁰

An', faix, be the piper o' Moses, they
 kep' the cat an' the dog,
 But it 'ud 'a been aisier wor av they
 lived be an Irish bog.

XI

How-an-iver they laid this body they
 foun' an the grass,
 Be the chapel-door, an' the people 'ud
 see it that wint in to mass—
 But a frish generation had riz, an' most
 of the ould was few,
 An' I did n't know him meself, an'
 none of the parish knew.

XII

But Molly kem limp'in' up wid her
 stick,—she was lamed iv a
 knee,—
 Thin a slip of a goss, ^{hu} call'd, 'Div
 ye know him, ^{ie} ha' Magee?'
 An' she stood up str^{it} ^{sthe} the queen of
 the world—^{the} lifted her
 head—
 'He said he would meet me to-morra!'
 an' dhropt down dead an the
 dead. ⁸⁰

XIII

Och, Molly, we thought, machree,
 ye would start back agin into
 life,
 Whin we laid yez, aich be aich, at yer
 wake like husban' an' wife.
 Sorra the dhry eye thin but was wet
 for the frinds that was gone!
 Sorra the silent throat, but we hard it
 cryin', 'Ochone!'
 An' Shamus O'Shea that has now ten
 childer, handsome an' tall,
 Him an' his childer wor keenin' as if
 he had lost thim all.

XIV

Thin his Riverence buried thim both
 in wan grave be the dead boor-
 tree, ¹
 The young man Danny O'Roon wid
 his ould woman, Molly Magee.

XV

May all the flowers o' Jerooslim blos-
 som an' spring from the grass,
 Imbrashin' an' kissin' aich other—as
 ye did—over yer Crass! ⁹⁰

¹ Elder-tree.

An' the lark fly out o' the flowers wid
his song to the sun an' the moon,
An' tell thim in hiven about Molly
Magee an' her Danny O'Roon,
Till Holy Saint Pether gets up wid his
kays an' opens the gate!
An' shure, be the Crass, that 's betther
nor cuttin' the Sassenach whate,
To be there wid the Blessed Mother
an' Saints an' Marthyrs galore,
An' singin' yer 'Aves' an' 'Pathers'
for iver an' ivermore.

XVI

An' now that I tould yer Honor what-
iver I hard an' seen,
Yer Honor 'ill give me a thrifle to
dhrink yer health in potheen.

THE SPINSTER'S SWEET-ARTS

I

Milk for my sweet-arts, Bess! fur it
mun be the time about now
When Molly cooms in fro' the far-end
close wi' her pailils fro' the cow.
Eh! tha be new to the plaice—
thou'rt gaäpin'—does n't tha
see
I calls 'em arter the fellers es once
was sweet upo' me?

II

Naäy, to be sewer, it be past 'er time.
What maäkes 'er sa laäte?
Goä to the laäne at the back, an'
looök thruf Maddison's gaäte!

III

Sweet-arts! Molly belike may 'a
lighted to-night upo' one.
Sweet-arts! thanks to the Lord that I
niver not listen'd to noän!
So I sits i' my oän armchair wi' my
oän kettle theere o' the hob,
An' Tommy the fust, an' Tommy the
second, an' Steevie an' Rob. 10

IV

Rob, coom oop 'ere o' my knee. Thou
sees that i' spite o' the men
I 'a kep' thruf thick an' thin my two
'oonderd a-year to mysen;
Yis! thaw tha call'd me es pretty es
ony lass i' the Shere;

An' thou be es pretty a tabby, but
Robby I seed thruf ya theere.

V

Feyther 'ud saäy I wur ugly es sin,
an' I beänt not vaäin,
But I niver wur downright hugly,
thaw soom 'ud 'a thowt ma
plaäin,
An' I was n't sa plaäin i' pink ribbons
— ye said I wur pretty i' pinks,
An' I liked to 'ear it I did, but I beänt
sich a fool as ye thinks;
Ye was stroäkin' ma down wi' the 'air,
as I be a-stroäkin' o' you,
But whiniver I looöked i' the glass I
wur sewer that it could n't be
true;
Niver wur pretty, not I, but ye
knew'd it wur pleasant to 'ear,
Thaw it warn't not me es wur pretty,
but my two 'oonderd a-year.

VI

D' ya mind the murnin' when we was
a-walkin' together, an' stood
By the claäy'd-ooop pond, that the
foälk be sa scared at, i' Gig-
glesby wood,
Wheer the poor wench drowndid her-
sen, black Sal, es 'ed been dis-
gräaced?
An' I feel'd thy arm es I stood wur
a-creäpin' about my waäist;
An' me es wur allus afear'd of a man's
gittin' ower fond,
I sidled awaäy an' awaäy till I plumpt
foot fust i' the pond;
And, Robby, I niver 'a liked tha sa
well, as I did that daäy,
Fur tha joompt in thysen, an' tha
hoickt my feet wi' a flop fro'
the claäy.
Ay, stick oop thy back, an' set oop
thy taäil, tha may gie ma a kiss,
Fur I walk'd wi' tha all the way hoäm
an' wur niver sa nigh saäyin'
Yis.
But wa boäth was i' sich a clat we
was shaämed to cross Gigglesby
Greeän,
Fur a cat may looök at a king, thou
knavs, but the cat mun be
cleän.
Sa we boäth on us kep' out o' sight o'
thewinders o' Gigglesby Hinn—

Naäy, but the claws o' tha! quiet!
they pricks cleän thruf to the
skin —

An' wa boäth slinkt 'oä'm by the brok-
ken shed i' the laäne at the
back,

Wheer the poodle runn'd at tha once,
an' thou runn'd oop o' the thack;
An' tha squee'dg'd my 'and i' the shed,
fur theere we was forced to
'ide,

Fur I seed that Steevie wur coomin',
and one o' the Tommies beside.

VII

Theree now, what art 'a mewin' at,
Steevie? for ow't I can tell — 41
Robby wur fust, to be sewer, or I
mow't 'a liked tha as well.

VIII

But, Robby, I thowt o' tha all the
while I wur chaängin' my gown,
An' I thowt, shall I chaänge my
staäte? but, O Lord, upo'
coomin' down —

My bran-new carpet es fresh es a
midder o' flowers i' Maäy —

Why 'ed n't tha wiped thy shoes? it
wur clatted all ower wi' cläy.

An' I could 'a cried ammost, fur I
seed that it could n't be,

An', Robby, I gied tha a räktin' that
sattled thy coortin' o' me.

An' Molly an' me was agreed, as we
was a-cleänin' the floor,

That a man be a durty thing an' a
trouble an' plague wi' indoor. 50

But I rued it arter a bit, fur I stuck
to tha moor na the rest,

But I could n't 'a lived wi' a man, an'
I knaws it be all fur the best.

IX

Naäy — let ma stroäk tha down till I
maäkes tha es smooth es silk,

But if I 'ed married tha, Robby, thou 'd
not 'a been worth thy milk,

Thou 'd niver 'a cotch'd ony mice but
'a left me the work to do,

And 'a taäsen to the bottle beside, so
es all that I 'ears be true;

But I loovs tha to maäke thyssen 'appy,
an' soä purr awaäy, my dear,

Thou 'ed wellnigh purr'd ma awaäy
fro' my oän two 'oonderd a-year.

X

Sweärin' ageän, you Toms, as ye used
to do twelve year sin'!

Ye niver eärd Steevie sweär 'cep' it
wur at a dog coomin' in, 60

An' boäth o' ye mun be fools to be
hallus a-shawin' your claws,

Fur I niver cared nothink for nei-
ther — an' one o' ye deä'd, ye
knaws!

Coom, give hoäver then, weänt ye?
I warrant ye soom fine daäy —

Theree, lig down — I shall hev to gie
one or tother awaäy.

Can't ye taäke pattern by Steevie? ye
shan't hev a drop fro' the päül.

Steevie be right good manners bang
thruf to the tip o' the taäil.

XI

Robby, git down wi' tha, wilt tha?
let Steevie coom oop o' my knee.

Steevie, my lad, thou 'ed very nigh
been the Steevie fur me!

Robby wur fust, to be sewer, 'e wur
burn an' bred i' the 'ouse,

But thou be es 'ansom a tabby es iver
patted a mouse. 70

XII

An' I beänt not vaäin, but I knaws I
'ed led tha a quieter life

Nor her wi' the hepithaph yonder! 'A
faäithful an' loovin' wife!

An' 'cos o' thy farm by the beck, an'
thy windmill oop o' the croft,

Tha thowt tha would marry ma, did
tha? but that wur a bit ower
soft,

Thaw thou was es soäber es daäy, wi'
a niced red faäce, an' es cleän

Es a shillin' fresh fro' the mint wi' a
bran-new 'eä'd o' the Queen,

An' thy farmin' es cleän es thyssen,
fur, Steevie, tha kep' it sa neät

That I niver not spied sa much es a
poppy along wi' the wheät,

An' the wool o' a thistle a-flyin' an'
seeädin' tha haäted to see;

'T wur es bad es a battle-twig¹ 'ere i'
my oän blue chaumber to me.

Ay, roob thy whiskers ageän ma, fur
I could 'a taäsen to tha well, 81

But fur thy bairns, poor Steevie, a
bouncin' boy an' a gell.

¹ Earwig.

XIII

An' thou was es fond o' thy bairns es
 I be mysen o' my cats,
 But I niver not wish'd fur childer, I
 hev n't naw likin' fur brats;
 Pretty anew when ya dresses 'em oop,
 an' they goås fur a walk,
 Or sits wi' their 'ands afoor 'em, an'
 does n't not 'inder the talk!
 But their bottles o' pap, an' their
 mucky bibs, an' the clats an'
 the clouts,
 An' their mashin' their toys to pieæces
 an' maåkin' ma deåf wi' their
 shouts,
 An' hallus a-joompin' about ma as if
 they was set upo' springs,
 An' a haxin' ma hawkard questions,
 an' saåyin' ondecnt things, 90
 An' a-callin' ma 'hugly' mayhap to my
 faåce, or a-teårin' my gown—
 Dear! dear! dear! I mun part them
 Tommies—Steevie, git down.

XIV

Ye be wuss nor the men-tommies, you.
 I tell'd ya, na moor o' that!
 Tom, lig there o' the cushion, an'
 tother Tom 'ere o' the mat.

XV

Theree! I ha' master'd *them*! Hed I
 married the Tommies—O Lord,
 To loove an' obaaÿ the Tommies! I
 could n't 'a stuck by my word.
 To be horder'd about, an' waåked,
 when Molly'd put out the light,
 By a man coomin' in wi' a hiccup at
 ony hour o' the night!
 An' the taåble staån'd wi' 'is aåle, an'
 the mud o' 'is boots o' the stairs,
 An' the stink o' 'is pipe i' the 'ouse, an'
 the mark o' 'is 'eåd o' the chairs!
 An' noån o' my four sweet-arts 'ud 'a
 let me 'a hed my oån waåy, 101
 Sa I likes 'em best wi' taåils when
 they 'ev n't a word to saåy.

XVI

An' I sits i' my oån little parlor, an'
 sarved by my oån little lass,
 Wi' my oån little garden outside, an'
 my oån bed o' sparrow-grass,
 An' my oån door-poorch wi' the wood-
 bine an' jessmine a-dressin' it
 greeån,

An' my oån fine Jackman i' purple a
 roåbin' the 'ouse like a queeån.

XVII

An' the little gells bobs to ma hoffens
 es I be abroad i' the laånes,
 When I goås fur to coomfurt the poor
 es be down wi' their haåches
 an' their paåins:
 An' a haåf-pot o' jam, or a mossel o'
 meåt when it beånt too dear,
 They maåkes ma a graåter lady nor
 'er i' the mansion theer, 110
 Hes 'es hallus to hax of a man how
 much to spare or to spend;
 An' a spinster I be an' I will be, if
 soå please God, to the hend.

XVIII

Mew! mew!—Bess wi' the milk! what
 ha maåde our Molly sa laåte?
 It should 'a been 'ere by seven, an'
 theere—it be strikin' height—
 'Cushie wur craåzed fur 'er cauf, well
 —I 'eård 'er a-maåkin' 'er moån,
 An' I thowt to mysen, 'thank God that
 I hev n't naw cauf o' my oån.'
 Theree!

Set it down!

Now, Robby!
 You Tommies shall waåit to-night
 Till Robby an' Steevie 'es 'ed their lap
 —an' it sarves ye right.

PROLOGUE

TO GENERAL HAMLEY

Our birches yellowing and from each
 The light leaf falling fast,
 While squirrels from our fiery beech
 Were bearing off the mast,
 You came, and look'd and loved the
 view
 Long-known and loved by me,
 Green Sussex fading into blue
 With one gray glimpse of sea;
 And, gazing from this height alone,
 We spoke of what had been
 Most marvellous in the wars your own
 Crimean eyes had seen;
 And—now like old-world inns that
 take
 Some warrior for a sign

That therewithin a guest may make
 True cheer with honest wine—
 Because you heard the lines I read
 Nor utter'd word of blame,
 I dare without your leave to head
 These rhymings with your name,
 Who know you but as one of those
 I fain would meet again,
 Yet know you, as your England knows
 That you and all your men
 Were soldiers to her heart's desire,
 When, in the vanish'd year,
 You saw the league-long rampart-fire
 Flare from Tel-el-Kebir
 Thro' darkness, and the foe was
 driven,
 And Wolseley overthrew
 Arâbi, and the stars in heaven
 Paled, and the glory grew.

THE CHARGE OF THE HEAVY BRIGADE AT BALACLAVA

OCTOBER 25, 1854

I

THE charge of the gallant three hun-
 dred, the Heavy Brigade !
 Down the hill, down the hill, thou-
 sands of Russians,
 Thousands of horsemen, drew to the
 valley—and stay'd ;
 For Scarlett and Scarlett's three hun-
 dred were riding by
 When the points of the Russian lances
 arose in the sky ;
 And he call'd, ' Left wheel into line ! '
 and they wheel'd and obey'd.
 Then he look'd at the host that had
 halted he knew not why,
 And he turn'd half round, and he bade
 his trumpeter sound
 To the charge, and he rode on ahead,
 as he waved his blade
 To the gallant three hundred whose
 glory will never die—
 ' Follow, ' and up the hill, up the hill,
 up the hill,
 Follow'd the Heavy Brigade.

II

The trumpet, the gallop, the charge,
 and the might of the fight !
 Thousands of horsemen had gather'd
 there on the height,

With a wing push'd out to the left and
 a wing to the right,
 And who shall escape if they close ?
 but he dash'd up alone
 Thro' the great gray slope of men,
 Sway'd his sabre, and held his own
 Like an Englishman there and then.
 All in a moment follow'd with force
 Three that were next in their fiery
 course,
 Wedged themselves in between horse
 and horse,
 Fought for their lives in the narrow
 gap they had made—
 Four amid thousands ! and up the hill,
 up the hill,
 Galloped the gallant three hundred, the
 Heavy Brigade.

III

Fell like a cannon-shot,
 Burst like a thunderbolt,
 Crash'd like a hurricane,
 Broke thro' the mass from below,
 Drove thro' the midst of the foe,
 Plunged up and down, to and fro,
 Rode flashing blow upon blow,
 Brave Inniskillens and Greys
 Whirling their sabres in circles of
 light !
 And some of us, all in amaze,
 Who were held for a while from the
 fight,
 And were only standing at gaze,
 When the dark-muffled Russian crowd
 Folded its wings from the left and the
 right,
 And roll'd them around like a cloud,—
 O, mad for the charge and the battle
 were we,
 When our own good redcoats sank
 from sight,
 Like drops of blood in a dark-gray sea,
 And we turn'd to each other, whis-
 per-
 ing, all dismay'd,
 ' Lost are the gallant three hundred of
 Scarlett's Brigade ! '

IV

' Lost one and all ' were the words
 Mutter'd in our dismay ;
 But they rode like victors and lords
 Thro' the forest of lances and swords
 In the heart of the Russian hordes,
 They rode, or they stood at bay
 Struck with the sword-hand and slew,



'The trumpet, the gallop, the charge, and the might of the fight'

Down with the bridle-hand drew
The foe from the saddle and threw
Underfoot there in the fray —
Ranged like a storm or stood like a rock
In the wave of a stormy day;
Till suddenly shock upon shock
Stagger'd the mass from without,
Drove it in wild disarray,
For our men gallopt up with a cheer
and a shout,
And the foeman surged, and waver'd,
and reel'd
Up the hill, up the hill, up the hill,
out of the field,
And over the brow and away.

v

Glory to each and to all, and the
charge that they made!
Glory to all the three hundred, and all
the Brigade!

NOTE.—The 'three hundred' of the 'Heavy Brigade' who made this famous charge were the Scots Greys and the 2d squadron of Inniskillens; the remainder of the 'Heavy Brigade' subsequently dashing up to their support.

The 'three' were Scarlett's aide-de-camp, Elliot, and the trumpeter, and Shegog the orderly, who had been close behind him.

EPILOGUE

IRENE.

Not this way will you set your name
A star among the stars.

POET.

What way?

IRENE.

You praise when you should blame
The barbarism of wars.
A juster epoch has begun.

POET.

Yet tho' this cheek be gray,
And that bright hair the modern sun,
Those eyes the blue to-day,
You wrong me, passionate little friend.

I would that wars should cease,
I would the globe from end to end
And some new Spirit o'erbear the
old,

Might sow and reap in peace,
Or Trade re-frain the Powers
From war with kindly links of gold,
Or Love with wreaths of flowers.
Slav, Teuton, Kelt, I count them all
My friends and brother souls,
With all the peoples, great and small,
That wheel between the poles.
But since our mortal shadow, Ill,
To waste this earth began —
Perchance from some abuse of Will
In worlds before the man
Involving ours — he needs must fight
To make true peace his own,
He needs must combat might with
might,

Or Might world rule alone;
And who loves war for war's own sake
Is fool, or crazed, or worse;
But let the patriot-soldier take
His meed of fame in verse;
Nay — tho' that realm were in the
wrong

For which her warriors bleed,
It still were right to crown with song
The warrior's noble deed —

A crown the Singer hopes may last,
For so the deed endures;

But Song will vanish in the Vast;
And that large phrase of yours

'A star among the stars,' my dear,
Is girlish talk at best;

For dare we dally with the sphere
As he did half in jest,

Old Horace? 'I will strike,' said he,
'The stars with head sublime,'

But scarce could see, as now we see,
The man in space and time,

So drew perchance a happier lot
Than ours, who rhyme to-day.

The fires that arch this dusky dot —

Yon myriad-worlded way —
The vast sun-clusters' gather'd blaze,
World-isles in lonely skies,

Whole heavens within themselves,
amaze

Our brief humanities.

And so does Earth; for Homer's fame,
Tho' carved in harder stone —
The falling drop will make his name
As mortal as my own.

IRENE.

No!

POET.

Let it live then — ay, till when?
Earth passes, all is lost
In what they prophesy, our wise
men,

Sun-flame or sunless frost,
And deed and song alike are swept
Away, and all in vain

As far as man can see, except
The man himself remain;

And tho', in this lean age forlorn,
Too many a voice may cry

That man can have no after-morn,
Not yet of those am I.

The man remains, and whatsoe'er
He wrought of good or brave
Will mould him thro' the cycle-year
That dawns behind the grave.

And here the Singer for his art
Not all in vain may plead
'The song that nerves a nation's heart
Is in itself a deed.'

TO VIRGIL

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF
THE MANTUANS FOR THE NINE-
TEENTH CENTENARY OF VIR-
GIL'S DEATH

I

ROMAN VIRGIL, thou that singest
Ilion's lofty temples robed in fire,
Ilion falling, Rome arising,
wars, and filial faith, and Dido's
pyre:

II

Landscape-lover, lord of language
more than he that sang the
'Works and Days,'
All the chosen coin of fancy
flashing out from many a golden
phrase;

III

Thou that singest wheat and wood-
land,
tilth and vineyard, hive and horse
and herd ;
All the charm of all the Muses
often flowering in a lonely word ;

IV

Poet of the happy Tityrus
piping underneath his beechen
bowers ;
Poet of the poet-satyr
whom the laughing shepherd
bound with flowers ;

V

Chanter of the Pollio, glorying
in the blissful years again to be,
Summers of the snakeless meadow,
unlaborious earth and oarless sea ;

VI

Thou that seest Universal
Nature moved by Universal Mind ;
Thou majestic in thy sadness
at the doubtful doom of human
kind ;

VII

Light among the vanish'd ages ;
star that gildest yet this phantom
shore ;
Golden branch amid the shadows,
kings and realms that pass to rise
no more ;

VIII

Now thy Forum roars no longer,
fallen every purple Cæsar's dome —
Tho' thine ocean-roll of rhythm
sound forever of Imperial Rome —

IX

Now the Rome of slaves hath perish'd,
and the Rome of freemen holds
her place,
I, from out the Northern Island
sunder'd once from all the human
race,

X

I salute thee, Mantovano,
I that loved thee since my day
began,
Wielder of the stateliest measure
ever moulded by the lips of man.

THE DEAD PROPHET

182—

I

DEAD !
And the Muses cried with a stormy
cry,
' Send them no more, for evermore.
Let the people die.'

II

Dead !
' Is it *he* then brought so low ?'
And a careless people flock'd from the
fields
With a purse to pay for the show.

III

Dead, who had served his time,
Was one of the people's kings,
Had labor'd in lifting them out of
slime,
And showing them, souls have
wings !

IV

Dumb on the winter heath he lay.
His friends had stript him bare,
And roll'd his nakedness everyway
That all the crowd might stare.

V

A storm-worn signpost not to be read
And a tree with a moulder'd nest
On its barkless bones, stood stark
by the dead ;
And behind him, low in the West,

VI

With shifting ladders of shadow and
light,
And blurr'd in color and form,
The sun hung over the gates of night,
And glared at a coming storm.

VII

Then glided a vulturous beldam forth,
That on dumb death had thriven ;
They call'd her ' Reverence ' here upon
earth,
And ' The Curse of the Prophet ' in
heaven.

VIII

She knelt — ' We worship him ' — all
but wept —

'So great, so noble, was he !'
She clear'd her sight, she arose, she
swept
The dust of earth from her knee.

IX

'Great ! for he spoke and the people
heard,
And his eloquence caught like a
flame
From zone to zone of the world, till
his word
Had won him a noble name.

X

'Noble ! he sung, and the sweet sound
ran
Thro' palace and cottage door,
For he touch'd on the whole sad planet
of man,
The kings and the rich and the poor ;

XI

'And he sung not alone of an old sun
set,
But a sun coming up in his youth !
Great and noble — O, yes — but yet —
For man is a lover of truth,

XII

'And bound to follow, wherever she
go
Stark-naked, and up or down,
Thro' her high hill-passes of stainless
snow,
Or the foulest sewer of the town —

XIII

'Noble and great — O, ay — but then,
Tho' a prophet should have his
due,
Was he noblier-fashion'd than other
men ?
Shall we see to it, I and you ?

XIV

'For since he would sit on a prophet's
seat,
As a lord of the human soul,
We needs must scan him from head to
feet,
Were it but for a wart or a mole ?'

XV

His wife and his child stood by him in
tears,

But she — she push'd them aside.
'Tho' a name may last for a thousand
years,
Yet a truth is a truth,' she cried.

XVI

And she that had haunted his path-
way still,
Had often truckled and cower'd
When he rose in his wrath, and had
yielded her will
To the master, as overpower'd,

XVII

She tumbled his helpless corpse
about.
'Small blemish upon the skin !
But I think we know what is fair
without
Is often as foul within.'

XVIII

She crouch'd, she tore him part from
part,
And out of his body she drew
The red 'blood-eagle'¹ of liver and
heart ;
She held them up to the view ;

XIX

She gabbled, as she groped in the
dead,
And all the people were pleased ;
'See, what a little heart,' she said,
'And the liver is half-diseased !'

XX

She tore the prophet after death,
And the people paid her well.
Lightnings flicker'd along the heath ;
One shriek'd, 'The fires of hell !'

EARLY SPRING

I

ONCE more the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And domes the red-plow'd hills
With loving blue ;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The throstles too.

¹ Old Viking term for lungs, liver, etc.,
when torn by the conqueror out of the body
of the conquered.

II

Opens a door in heaven ;
From skies of glass
A Jacob's ladder falls
On greening grass,
And o'er the mountain-walls
Young angels pass.

III

Before them fleets the shower,
And burst the buds,
And shine the level lands,
And flash the floods ;
The stars are from their hands
Flung thro' the woods,

IV

The woods with living airs
How softly fann'd,
Light airs from where the deep,
All down the sand,
Is breathing in his sleep,
Heard by the land.

V

O, follow, leaping blood,
The season's lure !
O heart, look down and up
Serene, secure,
Warm as the crocus cup,
Like snowdrops, pure !

VI

Past, Future glimpse and fade
Thro' some slight spell,
A gleam from yonder vale,
Some far blue fell,
And sympathies, how frail,
In sound and smell !

VII

Till at thy chuckled note,
Thou twinkling bird,
The fairy fancies range,
And, lightly stirr'd,
Ring little bells of change
From word to word.

VIII

For now the Heavenly Power
Makes all things new,
And thaws the cold, and fills
The flower with dew ;
The blackbirds have their wills,
The poets too.

PREFATORY POEM TO MY
BROTHER'S SONNETS

MIDNIGHT, JUNE 30, 1879

I

MIDNIGHT — in no midsummer tune
The breakers lash the shores ;
The cuckoo of a joyless June
Is calling out of doors.

And thou hast vanish'd from thine own
To that which looks like rest,
True brother, only to be known
By those who love thee best.

II

Midnight — and joyless June gone by,
And from the deluged park
The cuckoo of a worse July
Is calling thro' the dark ;

But thou art silent underground,
And o'er thee streams the rain,
True poet, surely to be found
When Truth is found again.

III

And, now to these unsummer'd skies
The summer bird is still,
Far off a phantom cuckoo cries
From out a phantom hill ;

And thro' this midnight breaks the sun
Of sixty years away,
The light of days when life begun,
The days that seem to-day,

When all my griefs were shared with thee,
As all my hopes were thine —
As all thou wert was one with me,
May all thou art be mine !

‘FRATER AVE ATQUE VALE’

Row us out from Desenzano, to your
Sirmione row !
So they row'd, and there we landed —
‘O venusta Sirmio !’
There to me thro' all the groves of
olive in the summer glow,
There beneath the Roman ruin where
the purple flowers grow,

Came that 'Ave atque Vale' of the
 Poet's hopeless woe,
 Tenderest of Roman poets nineteen
 hundred years ago,
 'Frater Ave atque Vale'—as we
 wander'd to and fro
 Gazing at the Lydian laughter of the
 Garda Lake below
 Sweet Catullus's all-but-island, olive-
 silvery Sirmio!

HELEN'S TOWER

[Written at the request of my friend,
 Lord Dufferin.]

HELEN'S TOWER, here I stand,
 Dominant over sea and land.
 Son's love built me, and I hold
 Mother's love in letter'd gold.
 Love is in and out of time,
 I am mortal stone and lime.
 Would my granite girth were strong
 As either love, to last as long!
 I should wear my crown entire
 To and from the Doomsday fire,
 And be found of angel eyes
 In earth's recurring Paradise.

EPITAPH ON LORD STRATFORD DE REDCLIFFE

IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

THOU third great Canning, stand
 among our best
 And noblest, now thy long day's
 work hath ceased,
 Here silent in our Minster of the
 West
 Who wert the voice of England in
 the East.

EPITAPH ON GENERAL GOR- DON

IN THE GORDON BOYS' NATIONAL
 MEMORIAL HOME NEAR WOKING

WARRIOR of God, man's friend, and
 tyrant's foe,
 Now somewhere dead far in the
 waste Soudan,

Thou livest in all hearts, for all men
 know
 This earth has never borne a nobler
 man.

EPITAPH ON CAXTON

IN ST. MARGARET'S, WESTMINSTER

Fiat Lux (his motto)

THY prayer was 'Light—more Light
 —while Time shall last!'
 Thou sawest a glory growing on
 the night,
 But not the shadows which that light
 would cast,
 Till shadows vanish in the Light of
 Light.

TO THE DUKE OF ARGYLL

O PATRIOT Statesman, be thou wise
 to know
 The limits of resistance, and the bounds
 Determining concession; still be bold
 Not only to slight praise but suffer
 scorn;
 And be thy heart a fortress to maintain
 The day against the moment, and the
 year
 Against the day; thy voice, a music
 heard
 Thro' all the yells and counter-yells
 of feud
 And faction, and thy will, a power to
 make
 This ever-changing world of circum-
 stance,
 In changing, chime with never-chang-
 ing Law.

HANDS ALL ROUND¹

FIRST pledge our Queen this solemn
 night,
 Then drink to England, every guest;
 That man's the best Cosmopolite
 Who loves his native country best.
 May freedom's oak for ever live
 With stronger life from day to day.

¹ Written after the Queen's escape from
 assassination, 1882.

That man's the true Conservative
Who lops the moulder'd branch
away.

Hands all round !
God the traitor's hope confound !
To this great cause of Freedom drink,
my friends,
And the great name of England,
round and round.

To all the loyal hearts who long
To keep our English Empire whole !
To all our noble sons, the strong
New England of the Southern Pole !
To England under Indian skies,
To those dark millions of her realm !
To Canada whom we love and prize,
Whatever statesman hold the helm.

Hands all round !
God the traitor's hope confound !
To this great name of England drink,
my friends,
And all her glorious empire, round
and round.

To all our statesmen so they be
True leaders of the land's desire !
To both our Houses, may they see
Beyond the borough and the shire !
We sail'd wherever ship could sail,
We founded many a mighty state ;
Pray God our greatness may not fail
Thro' craven fears of being great !
Hands all round !

God the traitor's hope confound !
To this great cause of Freedom drink,
my friends,
And the great name of England,
round and round.

FREEDOM

I

O THOU so fair in summers gone,
While yet thy fresh and virgin
soul
Inform'd the pillar'd Parthenon,
The glittering Capitol ;

II

So fair in southern sunshine bathed,
But scarce of such majestic mien
As here with forehead vapor-swathed
In meadows ever green ;

III

For thou — when Athens reign'd and
Rome,
Thy glorious eyes were dimm'd with
pain
To mark in many a freeman's home
The slave, the scourge, the chain ;

IV

O follower of the Vision, still
In motion to the distant gleam,
Howe'er blind force and brainless
will
May jar thy golden dream

V

Of Knowledge fusing class with
class,
Of civic Hate no more to be,
Of Love to leaven all the mass,
Till every soul be free ;

VI

Who yet, like Nature, wouldst not
mar
By changes all too fierce and fast
This order of her Human Star,
This heritage of the past ;

VII

O scorner of the party cry
That wanders from the public good,
Thou — when the nations rear on
high
Their idol smear'd with blood,

VIII

And when they roll their idol down —
Of saner worship sanely proud ;
Thou loather of the lawless crown
As of the lawless crowd ;

IX

How long thine ever-growing mind
Hath still'd the blast and strow'd
the wave,
Tho' some of late would raise a wind
To sing thee to thy grave,

X

Men loud against all forms of power —
Unfurnish'd brows, tempestuous
tongues,
Expecting all things in an hour —
Brass mouths and iron lungs !

POETS AND THEIR BIBLIO-
GRAPHIES

OLD poets foster'd under friendlier
skies,
Old Virgil who would write ten
lines, they say,
At dawn, and lavish all the golden
day
To make them wealthier in his readers'
eyes;
And you, old popular Horace, you
the wise
Adviser of the nine-years-ponder'd
lay,
And you, that wear a wreath of
sweeter bay,
Catullus, whose dead songster never
dies;
If, glancing downward on the kindly
sphere
That once had roll'd you round and
round the sun,
You see your Art still shrined in hu-
man shelves,
You should be jubilant that you flour-
ish'd here
* Before the Love of Letters, over-
done,
Had swamp'd the sacred poets with
themselves.

TO H. R. H. PRINCESS BEA-
TRICE

Two Suns of Love make day of hu-
man life,
Which else with all its pains, and
griefs, and deaths,

Were utter darkness—one, the Sun
of dawn
That brightens thro' the Mother's
tender eyes,
And warms the child's awakening
world—and one
The later-rising Sun of spousal Love,
Which from her household orbit draws
the child
To move in other spheres. The Mo-
ther weeps
At that white funeral of the single
life,
Her maiden daughter's marriage; and
her tears
Are half of pleasure, half of pain—
the child
Is happy—even in leaving *her!* but
thou,
True daughter, whose all-faithful,
filial eyes
Have seen the loneliness of earthly
thrones,
Wilt neither quit the widow'd Crown,
nor let
This later light of Love have risen in
vain,
But moving thro' the Mother's home,
between
The two that love thee, lead a summer
life,
Sway'd by each Love, and swaying to
each Love,
Like some conjectured planet in mid
heaven
Between two suns, and drawing down
from both
The light and genial warmth of double
day.



'Late, my grandson ! half the morning have I paced these sandy tracts'

LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER, ETC.

TO MY WIFE

I DEDICATE THIS DRAMATIC MONOLOGUE AND THE POEMS WHICH FOLLOW

LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER

LATE, my grandson ! half the morning
have I paced these sandy tracts,
Watch'd again the hollow ridges roar-
ing into cataracts,

Wander'd back to living boyhood
while I heard the curlews call,
I myself so close on death, and death
itself in Locksley Hall.

So—your happy suit was blasted—
she the faultless, the divine ;
And you liken—boyish babble—this
boy-love of yours with mine.

I myself have often babbled doubtless
of a foolish past ;
Babble, babble ; our old England may
go down in babble at last.

'Curse him !' curse your fellow-vic-
tim ? call him dotard in your
rage ?

Eyes that lured a doting boyhood well
might fool a dotard's age. 10

Jilted for a wealthier ! wealthier ? yet
perhaps she was not wise ;
I remember how you kiss'd the minia-
ture with those sweet eyes.

In the hall there hangs a painting—
Amy's arms about my neck—
Happy children in a sunbeam sitting
on the ribs of wreck.

In my life there was a picture, she
that clasp'd my neck had flown ;
I was left within the shadow sitting
on the wreck alone.

Yours has been a slighter ailment,
will you sicken for her sake ?
You, not you ! your modern amorist
is of easier, earthlier make.

Amy loved me, Amy fail'd me, Amy
was a timid child ;
But your Judith—but your world-
ling—*she* had never driven me
wild. 20

She that holds the diamond necklace
dearer than the golden ring,

She that finds a winter sunset fairer
than a morn of spring.

She that in her heart is brooding on
his briefer lease of life,
While she vows 'till death shall part
us,' she the would-be-widow
wife.

She the worldling born of worldlings—
father, mother—be content,
Even the homely farm can teach us
there is something in descent.

Yonder in that chapel, slowly sinking
now into the ground,
Lies the warrior, my forefather, with
his feet upon the bound.

Cross'd! for once he sail'd the sea to
crush the Moslem in his pride;
Dead the warrior, dead his glory, dead
the cause in which he died. 30

Yet how often I and Amy in the
mouldering aisle have stood,
Gazing for one pensive moment on
that founder of our blood.

There again I stood to-day, and where
of old we knelt in prayer,
Close beneath the casement crimson
with the shield of Locksley—
there,

All in white Italian marble, looking
still as if she smiled,
Lies my Amy dead in childbirth, dead
the mother, dead the child.

Dead—and sixty years ago, and dead
her aged husband now—
I, this old white-headed dreamer,
stoop'd and kiss'd her marble
brow.

Gone the fires of youth, the follies,
furies, curses, passionate tears,
Gone like fires and floods and earth-
quakes of the planet's dawning
years. 40

Fires that shook me once, but now to
silent ashes fallen away.
Cold upon the dead volcano sleeps the
gleam of dying day.

Gone the tyrant of my youth, and
mute below the chancel stones,
All his virtues—I forgive them—
black in white above his bones.

Gone the comrades of my bivouac,
some in fight against the foe,
Some thro' age and slow diseases,
gone as all on earth will go.

Gone with whom for forty years my
life in golden sequence ran,
She with all the charm of woman, she
with all the breadth of man,

Strong in will and rich in wisdom,
Edith, yet so lowly-sweet,
Woman to her inmost heart, and wo-
man to her tender feet, 50

Very woman of very woman, nurse of
ailing body and mind,
She that link'd again the broken chain
that bound me to my kind.

Here to-day was Amy with me, while
I wander'd down the coast,
Near us Edith's holy shadow, smiling
at the slighter ghost.

Gone our sailor-son thy father, Leonard
early lost at sea;
Thou alone, my boy, of Amy's kin
and mine art left to me.

Gone thy tender-natured mother,
wearying to be left alone,
Pining for the stronger heart that once
had beat beside her own.

Truth, for truth is truth, he worshipt,
being true as he was brave;
Good, for good is good, he fol-
low'd, yet he look'd beyond the
grave, 60

Wiser there than you, that crowning
barren Death as lord of all,
Deem this over-tragic drama's closing
curtain is the pall!

Beautiful was death in him, who
saw the death, but kept the
deck,
Saving women and their babes, and
sinking with the sinking wreck,

Gone for ever ! Ever ? no — for since
our dying race began,
Ever, ever, and for ever was the lead-
ing light of man.

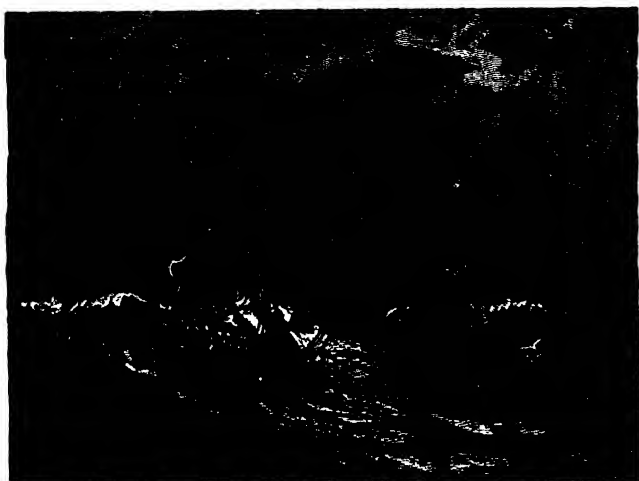
Those that in barbarian burials kill'd
the slave, and slew the wife
Felt within themselves the sacred pas-
sion of the second life.

Indian warriors dream of ampler hunt-
ing grounds beyond the night ;
Even the black Australian dying hopes
he shall return, a white. 70

'Forward' rang the voices then, and
of the many mine was one.
Let us hush this cry of 'Forward' till
ten thousand years have gone.

Far among the vanish'd races, old As-
syrian kings would flay
Captives whom they caught in battle
— iron-hearted victors they. 80

Ages after, while in Asia, he that led
the wild Moguls,
Timur built his ghastly tower of eighty
thousand human skulls ;



'Sinking with the sinking wreck'

Truth for truth, and good for good !
The good, the true, the pure,
the just —
Take the charm 'For ever' from them,
and they crumble into dust.

Gone the cry of 'Forward, Forward,'
lost within a growing gloom ;
Lost, or only heard in silence from
the silence of a tomb.

Half the marvels of my morning, tri-
umphs over time and space,
Staled by frequency, shrunk by usage
into commonest commonplace !

Then, and here in Edward's time, an
age of noblest English names,
Christian conquerors took and flung
the conquer'd Christian into
flames.

Love your enemy, bless your haters,
said the Greatest of the great ;
Christian love among the Churches
look'd the twin of heathen hate.

From the golden alms of Blessing man
had coin'd himself a curse :
Rome of Cæsar, Rome of Peter, which
was crueller ? which was worse ?

France had shown a light to all men,
 preach'd a Gospel, all men's
 good ;

Celtic Demos rose a Demon, shriek'd
 and slaked the light with blood.

Hope was ever on her mountain,
 watching till the day begun —
 Crown'd with sunlight — over dark-
 ness — from the still unrisen
 sun.

Have we grown at last beyond the
 passions of the primal clan ?
 'Kill your enemy, for you hate him,'
 still, 'your enemy' was a man.

Have we sunk below them ? peasants
 maim the helpless horse, and
 drive

Innocent cattle under thatch, and burn
 the kindlier brutes alive.

Brutes, the brutes are not your
 wrongers — burnt at midnight,
 found at morn,

Twisted hard in mortal agony with
 their offspring, born-unborn,

Clinging to the silent mother ! Are we
 devils ? are we men ?

Sweet Saint Francis of Assisi, would
 that he were here again, 100

He that in his Catholic wholeness used
 to call the very flowers

Sisters, brothers — and the beasts —
 whose pains are hardly less than
 ours !

Chaos, Cosmos ! Cosmos, Chaos ! who
 can tell how all will end ?

Read the wide world's annals, you,
 and take their wisdom for your
 friend.

Hope the best, but hold the Present
 fatal daughter of the Past,
 Shape your heart to front the hour,
 but dream not that the hour
 will last.

Ay, if dynamite and revolver leave
 you courage to be wise —

When was age so cramm'd with men-
 ace ? madness ? written, spoken
 lies ?

Envy wears the mask of Love, and,
 laughing sober fact to scorn,
 Cries to weakest as to strongest, 'Ye
 are equals, equal-born.' 110

Equal-born ? O, yes, if yonder hill be
 level with the flat.
 Charm us, orator, till the lion look no
 larger than the cat,

Till the cat thro' that mirage of over-
 heated language loom
 Larger than the lion, — Demos end in
 working its own doom.

Russia bursts our Indian barrier, shall
 we fight her ? shall we yield ?
 Pause ! before you sound the trumpet,
 hear the voices from the field.

Those three hundred millions under
 one Imperial sceptre now,
 Shall we hold them ? shall we loose
 them ? take the suffrage of the
 plow.

Nay, but these would feel and follow
 Truth if only you and you,
 Rivals of realm-ruining party, when
 you speak were wholly true. 120

Plowmen, shepherds, have I found,
 and more than once, and still
 could find,
 Sons of God, and kings of men in utter
 nobleness of mind,

Truthful, trustful, looking upward to
 the practised hustings-liar ;
 So the higher wields the lower, while
 the lower is the higher.

Here and there a cotter's babe is royal
 born by right divine ;
 Here and there my lord is lower than
 his oxen or his swine.

Chaos, Cosmos ! Cosmos, Chaos ! once
 again the sickening game ;
 Freedom, free to slay herself, and dy-
 ing while they shout her name.

Step by step we gain'd a freedom
 known to Europe, known to all ;
 Step by step we rose to greatness, —
 thro' the tonguesters we may
 fall. 130

You that woo the Voices — tell them
'old experience is a fool,'

Teach your flatter'd kings that only
those who cannot read can rule.

Pluck the mighty from their seat, but
set no meek ones in their place ;

Pillory Wisdom in your markets, pelt
your offal at her face.

Tumble Nature heel o'er head, and,
yelling with the yelling street,

Set the feet above the brain and swear
the brain is in the feet.

Bring the old dark ages back without
the faith, without the hope,

Break the State, the Church, the
Throne, and roll their ruins
down the slope.

Authors — essayist, atheist, novelist,
realist, rhymester, play your
part,

Paint the mortal shame of nature with
the living hues of art. 140

Rip your brothers' vices open, strip
your own foul passions bare ;

Down with Reticence, down with
Reverence — forward — naked
— let them stare.

Feed the budding rose of boyhood with
the drainage of your sewer ;

Send the drain into the fountain, lest
the stream should issue pure.

Set the maiden fancies wallowing in
the troughs of Zolaism, —

Forward, forward, ay, and backward,
downward too into the abyss !

Do your best to charm the worst, to
lower the rising race of men ;

Have we risen from out the beast,
then back into the beast again ?

Only 'dust to dust' for me that sicken
at your lawless din,

Dust in wholesome old-world dust be-
fore the newer world begin. 150

Heated am I ? you — you wonder —
well, it scarce becomes mine
age —

Patience ! let the dying actor mouth
his last upon the stage.

Cries of unprogressive dotage ere the
dotard fall asleep ?

Noises of a current nattering, not the
music of a deep ?

Ay, for doubtless I am old, and think
gray thoughts, for I am gray ;

After all the stormy changes shall we
find a changeless May ?

After madness, after massacre, Jaco-
binism and Jacquerie,

Some diviner force to guide us thro'
the days I shall not see ?

When the schemes and all the systems,
kingdoms and republics fall,

Something kindlier, higher, holier —
all for each and each for all ? 160

All the full-brain, half-brain races, led
by Justice, Love, and Truth ;

All the millions one at length with all
the visions of my youth ?

All diseases quench'd by Science, no
man halt, or deaf, or blind ;

Stronger ever born of weaker, lustier
body, larger mind ?

Earth at last a warless world, a single
race, a single tongue —

I have seen her far away — for is not
Earth as yet so young ? —

Every tiger madness muzzled, every
serpent passion kill'd,

Every grim ravine a garden, every
blazing desert till'd,

Robed in universal harvest up to
either pole she smiles,

Universal ocean softly washing all her
warless isles. 170

Warless ? when her tens are thou-
sands, and her thousands mil-
lions, then —

All her harvest all too narrow — who
can fancy warless men ?

Warless ? war will die out late then.
Will it ever ? late or soon ?

Can it, till this outworn earth be
dead as yon dead world the
moon?

Dead the new astronomy calls her. —
On this day and at this hour,
In this gap between the sandhills,
whence you see the Locksley
tower,

Here we met, our latest meeting —
Amy — sixty years ago —
She and I — the moon was falling
greenish thro' a rosy glow,

Just above the gateway tower, and
even where you see her now —
Here we stood and claspt each other,
swore the seeming-deathless
vow. — 180

Dead, but how her living glory lights
the hall, the dune, the grass!
Yet the moonlight is the sunlight, and
the sun himself will pass.

Venus near her! smiling downward at
this earthlier earth of ours,
Closer on the sun, perhaps a world of
never fading flowers.

Hesper, whom the poet call'd the
Bringer home of all good
things —
All good things may move in Hesper,
perfect peoples, perfect kings.

Hesper — Venus — were we native to
that splendor or in Mars,
We should see the globe we groan in,
fairest of their evening stars.

Could we dream of wars and carnage,
craft and madness, lust and
spite,
Roaring London, raving Paris, in that
point of peaceful light? 190

Might we not in glancing heavenward
on a star so silver-fair,
Yearn, and clasp the hands and mur-
mur, 'Would to God that we
were there'?

Forward, backward, backward, for-
ward, in the immeasurable sea,

Sway'd by vaster ebbs and flows than
can be known to you or me.

All the suns — are these but symbols
of innumerable man,
Man or Mind that sees a shadow of the
planner or the plan?

Is there evil but on earth? or pain in
every peopled sphere?
Well, be grateful for the sounding
watchword 'Evolution' here,

Evolution ever climbing after some
ideal good,
And Reversion ever dragging Evolu-
tion in the mud. 200

What are men that He should heed us?
cried the king of sacred song;
Insects of an hour, that hourly work
their brother insect wrong,

While the silent heavens roll, and suns
along their fiery way,
All their planets whirling round them,
flash a million miles a day.

Many an æon moulded earth before
her highest, man, was born,
Many an æon too may pass when earth
is manless and forlorn,

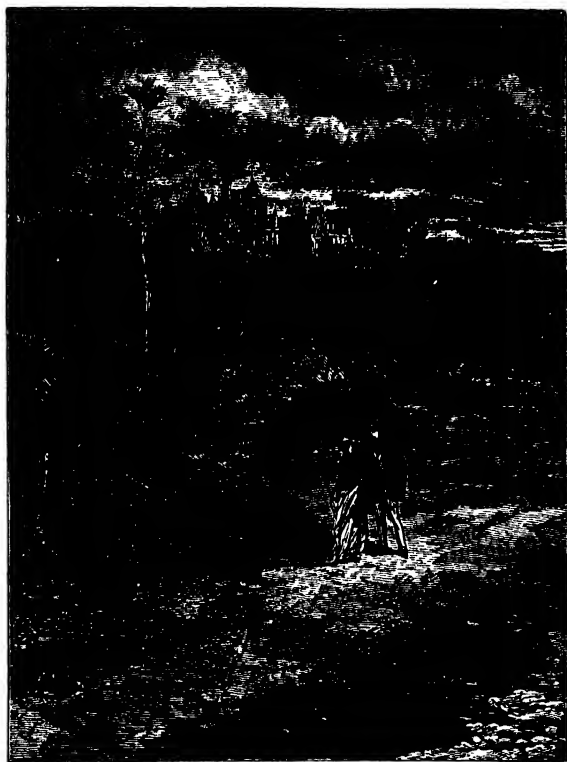
Earth so huge, and yet so bounded —
pools of salt, and plots of land —
Shallow skin of green and azure —
chains of mountain, grains of
sand!

Only That which made us meant us to
be mightier by and by, 209
Set the sphere of all the boundless
heavens within the human eye,

Sent the shadow of Himself, the
boundless, thro' the human soul;
Boundless inward in the atom, bound-
less outward in the Whole.

.

Here is Locksley Hall, my grandson,
here the lion-guarded gate.
Not to-night in Locksley Hall — to-
morrow — you, you come so
late.



'In this gap between the sandhills, whence you see the Locksley tower,
Here we met, our latest meeting — Amy — sixty years ago'

Wreck'd — your train — or all but
wreck'd ? a shatter'd wheel ? a
vicious boy !

Good, this forward, you that preach
it, is it well to wish you joy ?

Is it well that while we range with
Science, glorying in the Time,
City children soak and blacken soul
and sense in city slime ?

There among the glooming alleys Pro-
gress halts on palsied feet,
Crime and hunger cast our maidens by
the thousand on the street. 230

There the master scrimps his haggard
sempstress of her daily bread,
There a single sordid attic holds the
living and the dead.

There the smouldering fire of fever
creeps across the rotted floor,
And the crowded couch of incest in-
the warrens of the poor.

Nay, your pardon, cry your 'For-
ward,' yours are hope and
youth, but I —

Eighty winters leave the dog too lame
to follow with the cry,

Lame and old, and past his time, and
passing now into the night ;
Yet I would the rising race were half
as eager for the light.

Light the fading gleam of even ?
light the glimmer of the dawn ?
Aged eyes may take the growing glim-
mer for the gleam withdrawn.

Far away beyond her myriad coming
changes earth will be ²³¹
Something other than the wildest
modern guess of you and me.

Earth may reach her earthly-worst, or
if she gain her earthly-best,
Would she find her human offspring
this ideal man at rest ?

Forward then, but still remember how
the course of Time will swerve,
Crook and turn upon itself in many a
backward streaming curve.

Not the Hall to-night, my grandson !
Death and Silence hold their
own.

Leave the master in the first dark
hour of his last sleep alone.

Worthier soul was he than I am, sound
and honest, rustic Squire,
Kindly landlord, boon companion—
youthful jealousy is a liar. ²⁴⁰

Cast the poison from your bosom, oust
the madness from your brain.
Let the trampled serpent show you
that you have not lived in
vain.

Youthful ! youth and age are scholars
yet but in the lower school,
Nor is he the wisest man who never
proved himself a fool.

Yonder lies our young sea-village—
Art and Grace are less and
less:

Science grows and Beauty dwindles—
roofs of slated hideousness !

There is one old hostel left us where
they swing the Locksley shield,

Till the peasant cow shall butt the
'lion passant' from his field.

Poor old Heraldry, poor old History,
poor old Poetry, passing hence,
In the common deluge drowning old
political common-sense ! ²⁵⁰

Poor old voice of eighty crying after
voices that have fled !
All I loved are vanish'd voices, all my
steps are on the dead.

All the world is ghost to me, and as
the phantom disappears,
Forward far and far from here is all
the hope of eighty years.

.

In this hostel—I remember—I repent
it o'er his grave—
Like a clown—by chance he met me
—I refused the hand he gave.

From that casement where the trailer
mantles all the mouldering
bricks—

I was then in early boyhood, Edith
but a child of six—

While I shelter'd in this archway from
a day of driving showers—
Peep't the winsome face of Edith like
a flower among the flowers. ²⁶⁰

Here to-night ! the Hall to-morrow,
when they toll the chapel bell !
Shall I hear in one dark room a wail-
ing, 'I have loved thee well' ?

Then a peal that shakes the portal—
one has come to claim his
bride,

Her that shrank, and put me from
her, shriek'd, and started from
my side—

Silent echoes ! You, my Leonard, use
and not abuse your day,
Move among your people, know them,
follow him who led the way,

Strove for sixty widow'd years to
help his homelier brother men,

Served the poor, and built the cot-
tage, raised the school, and
drain'd the fen.

Hears he now the voice that wrong'd
him? who shall swear it cannot
be?

Earth would never touch her worst,
were one in fifty such as he. 270

Ere she gain her heavenly-best, a God
must mingle with the game.

Nay, there may be those about us
whom we neither see nor name,

Felt within us as ourselves, the Powers
of Good, the Powers of Ill,
Strowing balm, or shedding poison in
the fountains of the will.

Follow you the star that lights a
desert pathway, yours or mine.
Forward, till you see the Highest
Human Nature is divine.

Follow Light, and do the Right—
for man can half-control his
doom—

Till you find the deathless Angel seated
in the vacant tomb.

Forward, let the stormy moment fly
and mingle with the past.

I that loathed have come to love
him. Love will conquer at the
last. 280

Gone at eighty, mine own age, and I
and you will bear the pall;

Then I leave thee lord and master,
latest lord of Locksley Hall.

THE FLEET

I

You, you, *if* you shall fail to under-
stand

What England is, and what her all-
in-all,

On you will come the curse of all the
land,

Should this old England fall
Which Nelson left so great.

II

His isle, the mightiest Ocean-power
on earth,

Our own fair isle, the lord of every
sea—

Her fuller franchise—what would
that be worth—

Her ancient fame of Free—

Were she . . . a fallen state?

III

Her dauntless army scatter'd, and so
small,

Her island-myrriads fed from alien
lands—

The fleet of England is her all-in-all;

Her fleet is in your hands,
And in her fleet her fate.

IV

You, you, that have the ordering of
her fleet,

If you should only compass her dis-
grace,

When all men starve, the wild mob's
million feet

Will kick you from your place,
But then too late, too late.

OPENING OF THE INDIAN AND COLONIAL EXHIBITION BY THE QUEEN

WRITTEN AT THE REQUEST OF THE
PRINCE OF WALES

I

WELCOME, welcome with one voice!

In your welfare we rejoice,

Sons and brothers that have sent,

From isle and cape and continent,

Produce of your field and flood,

Mount and mine, and primal wood;

Works of subtle brain and hand,

And splendors of the morning land,

Gifts from every British zone;

Britons, hold your own!

II

May we find, as ages run,

The mother featured in the son;

And may yours for ever be

That old strength and constancy

Which has made your fathers great
In our ancient island State,
And wherever her flag fly,
Glorying between sea and sky,
Makes the might of Britain known;
Britons, hold your own !

III

Britain fought her sons of yore—
Britain fail'd ; and never more,
Careless of our growing kin,
Shall we sin our fathers' sin,
Men that in a narrower day —
Unprophetic rulers they —
Drove from out the mother's nest
That young eagle of the West
To forage for herself alone ;
Britons, hold your own !

IV

Sharers of our glorious past,
Brothers, must we part at last ?
Shall we not thro' good and ill
Cleave to one another still ?
Britain's myriad voices call,
'Sons, be welded each and all
Into one imperial whole,
One with Britain, heart and soul !
One life, one flag, one fleet, one
throne !'
Britons, hold your own !

TO W. C. MACREADY

1851

FAREWELL, Macready, since to-night
we part ;
Full-handed thunders often have
confessed
Thy power, well-used to move the
public breast.
We thank thee with our voice, and
from the heart.
Farewell, Macready, since this night
we part,
Go, take thine honors home ; rank
with the best,
Garrick and statelier Kemble, and
the rest
Who made a nation purer through
their art.
Thine is it that our drama did not die,
Nor flicker down to brainless panto-
mime,
And those gilt gauds men-children
swarm to see.
Farewell, Macready, moral, grave,
sublime ;
Our Shakespeare's bland and univer-
sal eye
Dwells pleased, through twice a
hundred years, on thee.



QUEEN VICTORIA

DEMETER AND OTHER POEMS

TO THE MARQUIS OF DUFFERIN AND AVA

I

At times our Britain cannot rest,
 At times her steps are swift and
 rash ;
 She moving, at her girdle clash
 The golden keys of East and West.

II

Not swift or rash, when late she lent
 The sceptres of her West, her East,
 To one that ruling has increased
 Her greatness and her self-content.

III

Your rule has made the people love
 Their ruler. Your viceregal days

Have added fullness to the phrase
Of 'Gauntlet in the velvet glove.'

IV

But since your name will grow with
time,
Not all, as honoring your fair fame
Of Statesman, have I made the
name
A golden portal to my rhyme ;

V

But more, that you and yours may
know
From me and mine, how dear a debt
We owed you, and are owing yet
To you and yours, and still would
owe.

VI

For he — your India was his Fate,
And drew him over sea to you —
He fain had ranged her thro' and
thro',
To serve her myriads and the State, —

VII

A soul that, watch'd from earliest
youth,
And on thro' many a brightening
year,
Had never swerved for craft or fear,
By one side-path, from simple truth ;

VIII

Who might have chased and claspt
Renown
And caught her chaplet here — and
there
In haunts of jungle-poison'd air
The flame of life went wavering
down ;

IX

But ere he left your fatal shore,
And lay on that funereal boat,
Dying, 'Unspeakable,' he wrote,
'Their kindness,' and he wrote no
more ;

X

And sacred is the latest word ;
And now the Was, the Might-have-
been,
And those lonerites I have not seen,
And one drear sound I have not heard,

XI

Are dreams that scarce will let me be
Not there to bid my boy farewell,
When That within the coffin fell,
Fell — and flash'd into the Red Sea,

XII

Beneath a hard Arabian moon
And alien stars. To question why
The sons before the fathers die,
Not mine ! and I may meet him soon ;

XIII

But while my life's late eve endures,
Nor settles into hueless gray,
My memories of his briefer day
Will mix with love for you and yours

ON THE JUBILEE OF QUEEN VICTORIA

I

FIFTY times the rose has flower'd and
faded,
Fifty times the golden harvest fallen,
Since our Queen assumed the globe,
the sceptre.

II

She beloved for a kindliness
Rare in fable or history,
Queen, and Empress of India,
Crown'd so long with a diadem
Never worn by a worthier,
Now with prosperous auguries
Comes at last to the bounteous
Crowning year of her Jubilee.

III

Nothing of the lawless, of the despot,
Nothing of the vulgar, or vainglorious,
All is gracious, gentle, great and
queenly.

IV

You then joyfully, all of you,
Set the mountain aflame to-night,
Shoot your stars to the firmament,
Deck your houses, illuminate
All your towns for a festival,
And in each let a multitude
Loyal, each, to the heart of it,
One full voice of allegiance,
Hail the fair Ceremonial
Of this year of her Jubilee.

V

Queen, as true to womanhood as
Queenhood,
Glorying in the glories of her people,
Sorrowing with the sorrows of the
lowest!

VI

You, that wanton in affluence,
Spare not now to be bountiful,
Call your poor to regale with you,
All the lowly, the destitute,
Make their neighborhood health-
fuller,
Give your gold to the hospital,
Let the weary be comforted,
Let the needy be banqueted,
Let the maim'd in his heart rejoice
At this glad Ceremonial,
And this year of her Jubilee.

VII

Henry's fifty years are all in shadow,
Gray with distance Edward's fifty
summers,
Even her Grandsire's fifty half forgot-
ten.

VIII

You, the Patriot Architect,
You that shape for eternity,
Raise a stately memorial,
Make it regally gorgeous,
Some Imperial Institute,
Rich in symbol, in ornament,
Which may speak to the centuries,
All the centuries after us,
Of this great Ceremonial,
And this year of her Jubilee.

IX

Fifty years of ever-broadening Com-
merce!
Fifty years of ever-brightening Sci-
ence!
Fifty years of ever-widening Empire!

X

You, the Mighty, the Fortunate,
You, the Lord-territorial,
You, the Lord-manufacturer,
You, the hardy, laborious,
Patient children of Albion,
You, Canadian, Indian,
Australasian, African,
All your hearts be in harmony,

All your voices in unison,
Singing, 'Hail to the glorious
Golden year of her Jubilee!'

XI

Are there thunders moaning in the
distance?
Are there spectres moving in the dark-
ness?
Trust the Hand of Light will lead her
people,
Till the thunders pass, the spectres
vanish,
And the Light is Victor, and the dark-
ness
Dawns into the Jubilee of the Ages.

TO PROFESSOR JEBB

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

FAIR things are slow to fade away,
Bear witness you, that yesterday¹,
From out the Ghost of Pindar in
you
Roll'd an Olympian; and they say²

That here the torpid mummy wheat
Of Egypt bore a grain as sweet
As that which gilds the glebe of
England,
Sunn'd with a summer of milder heat.

So may this legend for awhile,
If greeted by your classic smile,
Tho' dead in its Trinacrian Enna,
Blossom again on a colder isle.

DEMETER AND PERSEPHONE

(IN ENNA)

FAINT as a climate-changing bird that
flies
All night across the darkness, and at
dawn
Falls on the threshold of her native
land,
And can no more, thou camest, O my
child,
Led upward by the God of ghosts and
dreams,

¹ In Bologna.

² They say, for the fact is doubtful.

Who laid thee at Eleusis, dazed and dumb
 With passing thro' at once from state to state,
 Until I brought thee hither, that the day,
 When here thy hands let fall the gather'd flower,
 Might break thro' clouded memories once again¹⁰
 On thy lost self. A sudden nightingale
 Saw thee, and flash'd into a frolic of song
 And welcome; and a gleam as of the moon,
 When first she peers along the tremulous deep,
 Fled wavering o'er thy face, and chased away
 That shadow of a likeness to the king
 Of shadows, thy dark mate. Persephone!
 Queen of the dead no more — my child! Thine eyes
 Again were human-godlike, and the Sun
 Burst from a swimming fleece of winter gray,²⁰
 And robed thee in his day from head to feet:—
 'Mother!' and I was folded in thine arms.

Child, those imperial, disimpassion'd eyes
 Awed even me at first, thy mother — eyes
 That oft had seen the serpent-wanded power
 Draw downward into Hades with his drift
 Of flickering spectres, lighted from below
 By the red race of fiery Phlegethon;
 But when before have Gods or men beheld
 The Life that had descended re-arise,
 And lighted from above him by the Sun?³¹
 So mighty was the mother's childless cry,
 A cry that rang thro' Hades, Earth, and Heaven!

So in this pleasant vale we stand again,

The field of Enna, now once more ablaze
 With flowers that brighten as thy foot-step falls,
 All flowers — but for one black blur of earth
 Left by that closing chasm, thro' which the car
 Of dark Aïdoneus rising rapt thee hence.
 And here, my child, tho' folded in thine arms,⁴⁰
 I feel the deathless heart of motherhood
 Within me shudder, lest the naked glebe
 Should yawn once more into the gulf, and thence
 The shrilly whinnys of the team of Hell,
 Ascending, pierce the glad and songful air,
 And all at once their arch'd necks, midnight-maned,
 Jet upward thro' the midday blossom. No!
 For, see, thy foot has touch'd it; all the space
 Of blank earth-baldness clothes itself afresh,
 And breaks into the crocus-purple hour⁵⁰
 That saw thee vanish.

Child, when thou wert gone,
 I envied human wives, and nested birds,
 Yea, the cubb'd lioness; went in search of thee
 Thro' many a palace, many a cot, and gave
 Thy breast to ailing infants in the night,
 And set the mother waking in amaze
 To find her sick one whole; and forth again
 Among the wail of midnight winds, and cried,
 'Where is my loved one? Wherefore do ye wail?'
 And out from all the night an answer shrill'd,⁶⁰
 'We know not, and we know not why we wail.'
 I climb'd on all the cliffs of all the seas,
 And ask'd the waves that moan about the world,

'Where? do ye make your moaning
 for my child?'
 And round from all the world the
 voices came,
 'We know not, and we know not why
 we moan.'
 'Where?' and I stared from every
 eagle-peak,
 I thridded the black heart of all the
 woods,
 I peer'd thro' tomb and cave, and in
 the storms
 Of autumn swept across the city, and
 heard ⁷⁰
 The murmur of their temples chanting
 me,
 Me, me, the desolate mother! 'Where?'
 — and turn'd,
 And fled by many a waste, forlorn of
 man,
 And grieved for man thro' all my grief
 for thee, —
 The jungle rooted in his shatter'd
 hearth,
 The serpent coil'd about his broken
 shaft,
 The scorpion crawling over naked
 skulls; —
 I saw the tiger in the ruin'd fane
 Spring from his fallen God, but trace
 of thee
 I saw not; and far on, and, following
 out ⁸⁰
 A league of labyrinthine darkness,
 came
 On three gray heads beneath a gleam-
 ing rift.
 'Where?' and I heard one voice from
 all the three,
 'We know not, for we spin the lives
 of men,
 And not of Gods, and know not why
 we spin!
 There is a Fate beyond us.' Nothing
 knew.

Last as the likeness of a dying
 man,
 Without his knowledge, from him flits
 to warn
 A far-off friendship that he comes no
 more,
 So he, the God of dreams, who heard
 my cry, ⁹⁰
 Drew from thyself the likeness of thy-
 self

Without thy knowledge, and thy
 shadow past
 Before me, crying, 'The Bright one in
 the highest
 Is brother of the Dark one in the low-
 est,
 And Bright and Dark have sworn that
 I, the child
 Of thee, the great Earth-Mother, thee,
 the Power
 That lifts her buried life from gloom
 to bloom,
 Should be for ever and for evermore
 The Bride of Darkness.'

So the Shadow wail'd.
 Then I, Earth-Goddess, cursed the
 Gods of heaven. ¹⁰⁰
 I would not mingle with their feasts;
 to me
 Their nectar smack'd of hemlock on
 the lips,
 Their rich ambrosia tasted aconite.
 The man, that only lives and loves an
 hour,
 Seem'd nobler than their hard eterni-
 ties.
 My quick tears kill'd the flower, my
 ravings hush'd
 The bird, and lost in utter grief I
 fail'd
 To send my life thro' olive-yard and
 vine
 And golden-grain, my gift to helpless
 man.
 Rain-rotten died the wheat, the barley-
 spears ¹¹⁰
 Were hollow-husk'd, the leaf fell, and
 the Sun,
 Pale at my grief, drew down before
 his time
 Sickening, and Ætna kept her winter
 snow.

Then He, the brother of this Dark-
 ness, He
 Who still is highest, glancing from his
 height
 On earth a fruitless fallow, when he
 miss'd
 The wonted steam of sacrifice, the
 praise
 And prayer of men, decreed that thou
 shouldst dwell
 For nine white moons of each whole
 year with me.

Three dark ones in the shadow with
thy king. 120

Once more the reaper in the gleam
of dawn
Will see me by the landmark far
away,
Blessing his field, or seated in the
dusk
Of even, by the lonely threshing-floor,
Rejoicing in the harvest and the
grange.

Yet I, Earth-Goddess, am but ill-
content
With them who still are highest.
Those gray heads,
What meant they by their 'Fate be-
yond the Fates'
But younger kindlier Gods to bear us
down,
As we bore down the Gods before us ?
Gods, 130
To quench, not hurl the thunderbolt,
to stay,
Not spread the plague, the famine ;
Gods indeed,
To send the noon into the night and
break
The sunless halls of Hades into Hea-
ven ?
Till thy dark lord accept and love the
Sun,
And all the Shadow die into the Light,
When thou shalt dwell the whole
bright year with me,
And souls of men, who grew beyond
their race,
And made themselves as Gods against
the fear
Of Death and Hell ; and thou that
hast from men, 140
As Queen of Death, that worship
which is Fear,
Henceforth, as having risen from out
the dead,
Shalt ever send thy life along with
mine
From buried grain thro' springing
blade, and bless
Their garner'd autumn also, reap with
me,
Earth-mother, in the harvest hymns of
Earth
The worship which is Love, and see
no more

The Stone, the Wheel, the dimly-glim-
mering lawns
Of that Elysium, all the hateful fires
Of torment, and the shadowy warrior
glide 150
Along the silent field of Asphodel.

OWD ROÄ¹

NAAV, noä mander² o' use to be callin'
'im Roä, Roä, Roä,
Fur the dog's stoän-deaf, an' 'e's blind,
'e can naither stan' nor goä.

But I meäns fur to maäke 'is owd aäge
as 'appy as iver I can,
Fur I owäs owd Roäver moor nor I
iver owäd mottal man.

Thou 's rode of 'is back when a babby,
afoor thou was gotten too owd,
Fur 'e 'd fetch an' carry like owt, 'e
was allus as good as gowd.

Eh, but 'e 'd fight wi' a will *when* 'e
fowt ; 'e could howd³ 'is oän,
An' Roä was the dog as knaw'd when
an' wheere to bury his boäne.

An' 'e kep his heäð hoop like a king,
an' 'e 'd niver not down wi' 'is
taäil,
Fur 'e 'd niver done nowt to be
shaämed on, when we was i'
Howlaby Daäle. 10

An' 'e sarved me sa well when 'e
lived, that, Dick, when 'e cooms
to be deäð,
I thinks as I'd like fur to hev soom
soort of a sarvice reäð.

Fur 'e's moor good sense na the Par-
liament man 'at stans fur us
'ere,
An' I 'd voät fur 'im, my oän sen, if 'e
could but stan' for the Shere.

'Faäithful an' True' — them words be
i' Scriptur — an' Faäithful an'
True
Ull be fun' upo' four short legs ten
times fur one upo' two.

¹ Old Rover.

³ Hold.

² Manner.

⁴ Found.

An' maäybe they'll walk upo' two,
but I knaws they runs upo'
four,¹—

Bedtime, Dicky! but waäit till tha
'eärs it be strikin' the hour.

Fur I wants to tell tha o' Roä when
we lived i' Howlaby Daäle,
Ten year sin' — Naäy — naäy! tha mun
nobbut hev' onc glass of aäle. 20

Straänge an' owd-farran'd² the 'ouse,
an' belt³ long afor my daäy,
Wi' haäfe o' the chimleys a-twizzen'd⁴
an' twined like a band o' haäy.

The fellers as maäkes them picturs,
'ud coom at the fall o' the year,
An' saddle their ends upo' stools to
pictur the door-poorch there,

An' the Heagle 'as hed two heäds
stannin' there o' the brokken
stick;⁵

An' they niver 'ed seed sich ivin'⁶ as
graw'd hall ower the brick;

An' there i' the 'ouse one night — but
it's down, an' all on it now
Goän into mangles an' tonups,⁷ an'
raäved slick thruf by the plow —

Theere, when the 'ouse wur a house,
one night I wur sittin' aloän,
Wi' Roäver athurt my feeät, an'
sleeäpin' still as a stoän, 30

Of a Christmas Eäve, an' as cowl as
this, an' the midders⁸ as white,
An' the fences all on 'em bolster'd oop
wi' the windle⁹ that night;

An' the cat wur a-sleeäpin' alongside
Roäver, but I wur awaäke,
An' smoäkin' an' thinkin' o' things —
Doänt maäke thysen sick wi'
the caäke.

Fur the men ater supper 'ed sung their
songs an' 'ed 'ed their beer,

¹ ou as in 'house.'

² 'Owd-farran'd,' old-fashioned.

³ Built. ⁴ 'Twizzen'd,' twisted.

⁵ On a staff *ragulé*. ⁶ Ivy.

⁷ Mangolds and turnips.

⁸ Meadows. ⁹ Drifted snow.

An' 'ed goän their waäys; ther was
nobbut three, an noän on 'em
theree.

They was all on 'em fear'd o' the
Ghoäst an' dussn't not sleeäp i'
the 'ouse,

But, Dicky, the Ghoäst moästlins¹
was nobbut a rat or a mouse.

An' I looökt out wonst² at the night,
an' the daäle was all of a thaw,
Fur I seed the beck coomin' down like
a long black snaäke i' the snaw,

An' I heärd greät helps o' the snaw
slushin' down fro' the bank to
the beck,

An' then as I stood i' the doorwaäy, I
feeäld it drip o' my neck.

Saw I turn'd in ageän, an' I thowt o'
the good owd times 'at was goan,
An' the munney they maäde by the
war, an' the times 'at was
coomin' on;

Fur I thowt if the Staäte was a-gawin'
to let in furriners' wheät,
Howiver was British farmers to stan'
ageän o' their feeät?

Howiver was I fur to find my rent an'
to paäy my men?
An' all along o' the feller³ as turn'd
'is back of hissen.

Thou slep i' the chaumber above us,
we could n't ha' 'eärd tha call,
Sa moother 'ed tell'd ma to bring tha
down, an' thy craädle an' all; 50

Fur the gell o' the farm 'at slep wi'
tha then 'ed gotten wer leäve,
Fur to goä that night to 'er foälk by
cause o' the Christmas Eäve;

But I cleän forgot tha, my lad, when
moother 'ed gotten to bed,
An' I slep i' my chair hup-on-end, an'
the Freeä Traäde runn'd i' my
'ead,

¹ 'Moästlins,' for the most part, gener-
ally.

² Once.

³ Peel.

Till I dreäm'd 'at Squire walkt in, an'
I says to him, 'Squire, ya 're
laäte,'¹

Then I seəd 'at 'is faäce wur as red as
the Yule-block theree i' the
graäte.

An' 'e says, 'Can ya paäy me the rent
to-night?' an' I says to 'im,
'Noä,'²

An' 'e cotch'd howd hard o' my hairm,¹
'Then hout to-night tha shall
goä.'

'Tha 'll niver,' says I, 'be a-turnin'
ma hout upo' Christmas Eäve?'

Then I waäked an' I fun it was Roäver
a-tuggin' an' teärin' my sleäve.

An' I thowt as 'e 'd goän cleän-wud,²
fur I noäwaäys knaw'd 'is in-
tent;⁶¹

An' I says, 'Git awaäy, ya beast,' an'
I fetcht 'im a kick, an' 'e went.

Then 'e tummled up stairs, fur I 'eärd
'im, as if 'e 'd 'a brokken 'is
neck,

An' I 'd cleär forgot, little Dicky, thy
chaumberdoor would n't sneck;⁸

An' I slep i' my chair ageän wi' my
hairm hingin' down to the floor,

An' I thowt it was Roäver a-tuggin'
an' teärin' me wuss nor afoor,

An' I thowt 'at I kick'd 'im ageän,
but I kick'd thy moother istead.

'What arta snorin' theree fur? the
house is afire,' she said.

Thy moother 'ed beän a-naggin' about
the gell o' the farm,

She offens 'ud spy summut wrong
when there warn't not a mossel
o' harm;⁷⁰

An' she did n't not solidly meän I wur
gawin' that waäy to the bad,
Fur the gell⁴ was as howry a trollope
as iver traäpes'd i' the squad.

¹ Arm.

² Mad.

³ Latch.

⁴ 'The girl was as dirty a slut as ever
trudged in the mud,' but there is a sense
of slatternliness in 'traäpes'd' which is
not expressed in 'trudged.'

But moother was free of 'er tongue,
as I offens 'ev tell'd 'er mysen,
Sa I kep i' my chair, fur I thowt she
was nobbut a-rilin' ma then.

An' I says, 'I 'd be good to tha, Bess,
if tha'd onywaäys let ma be
good,'

But she skelpt ma haäfe ower i' the
chair, an' screeäd like a howl
gone wud¹—

'Ya mun run fur the lether,² Git
oop, if ya 're onywaäys good
for owt,'

And I says, 'If I beänt noäwaäys
— not nowadaäys — good fur
nowt —

'Yit I beänt sich a nowt³ of all nowts
as 'ull hallus do as 'e 's bid.'

'But the stairs is afire,' she said; then
I seəd 'er a-cryin', I did. ⁸⁰

An' she beäld, 'Ya mun saäve little
Dick, an' be sharp about it an'
all,'

Sa I runs to the yard fur a lether, an'
sets 'im ageän the wall,

An' I claums an' I mashes the winder
hin, when I gits to the top,

But the heät druv hout i' my heyes
till I feäld mysen ready to drop.

Thy moother was howdin' the lether,
an' tellin' me not to be skeärd,

An' I was n't afeärd, or I thinks leäst-
waäys as I was n't afeärd;

But I could n't see fur the smoäke
wheree thou was a-liggin, my
lad,

An' Roäver was theree i' the chaumber
a-yowlin' an' yaupin' like mad;

An' thou was a-beälin' likewise, an'
a-squeälin', as if tha was bit,

An' it was n't a bite but a burn, fur the
merk 's⁴ o' thy shou'der yit; ⁹⁰

¹ 'She half overturned me and shrieked
like an owl gone mad.'

² Ladder.

³ A thoroughly insignificant or worthless
person.

⁴ Mark.

Then I call'd out, 'Roä, Roä, Roä,'
thaw I did n't haäfe think as 'e
'd 'ear,

*But 'e coom'd thruf the fire wi' my bairn
'i's mouth to the winder there!*

He coom'd like a hangel o' marcy as
soon as 'e 'eärd 'is naäme,
Or like tother hangel i' Scriptur 'at
summun seed i' the flaäme,

When summun 'ed hax'd fur a son,
an' 'e promised a son to she,
An' Roä was as good as the hangel i'
saävin' a son fur me.

Sa I browt tha down, an' I says, 'I mun
gaw up ageän fur Roä.'
'Gaw up ageän fur the varmint?' I
tell'd 'er, 'Yeäs, I mun goä.'

An' I claumb'd up ageän to the win-
der, an' clemm'd¹ owd Roä by
the 'eärd,

An' 'is 'air coom'd off i' my 'ands an' I
taäked 'im at fust fur deädd; ¹⁰⁰

Fur 'e smell'd like a herse a-singein',
an' seeäm'd as blind as a poop,
An' haäfe on 'im bare as a bublin'.² I
could n't wakken 'im oop,

But I browt 'im down, an' we got to
the barn, fur the barn would n't
burn

Wi' the wind blawin' hard tother waäy,
an' the wind was n't like to turn.

An' I kep a-callin' o' Roä till 'e wag-
gled 'is taäil fur a bit,

But the cocks kep a-crawin' an' craw-
in' all night, an' I 'ears 'em yit ;

An' the dogs was a-yowlin' all round,
and thou was a-squeälin' thysen,
An' moother was naggin' an' groänin'
an' moänin' an' naggin' ageän ;

An' I 'eärd the bricks an' the baulks³
rummle down when the roof
gev waäy,

Fur the fire was a-raägin' an' raävin'
an' roarin' like judgment daäy.

¹ Clutched.

² 'Bubbling,' a young unfledged bird.

³ Beams.

Warm enew there sewer-ly, but the
barn was as cowl'd as owt, ¹¹¹
An' we cuddled and huddled together,
an' hapt¹ wersens oop as we
mowt.

An' I browt Roä round, but moother
'ed beän sa soäik'd wi' the thaw
'At she cotch'd 'er death o' cowl'd that
night, poor soul, i' the straw.

Haäfe o' the parish runn'd oop when
the rig-tree² was tummlin' in —
Too laäte — but it's all ower now —
hall hower — an' ten year sin' ;

Too laäte, tha mun git tha to bed,
but I'll coom an' I'll squench
the light,

Fur we moänt 'ev naw moor fires —
and soä, little Dick, good-night.

VASTNESS

I

MANY a hearth upon our dark globe
sighs after many a vanish'd
face,

Many a planet by many a sun may
roll with the dust of a vanish'd
race.

II

Raving politics, never at rest — as this
poor earth's pale history runs, —
What is it all but a trouble of ants in
the gleam of a million million
of suns ?

III

Lies upon this side, lies upon that
side, truthless violence mourn'd
by the wise,
Thousands of voices drowning his own
in a popular torrent of lies upon
lies ;

IV

Stately purposes, valor in battle, glo-
rious annals of army and fleet,
Death for the right cause, death for
the wrong cause, trumpets of
victory, groans of defeat ;

¹ Wrapt ourselves.

² The beam that runs along the roof of
the house just beneath the ridge.

V

Innocence seethed in her mother's
milk, and Charity setting the
martyr aflame;
Thralldom who walks with the banner
of Freedom, and recks not to
ruin a realm in her name.

VI

Faith at her zenith, er all but lost in
the gloom of doubts that darken
the schools;
Craft with a bunch of all-heal in her
hand, follow'd up by her vassal
legion of fools;

VII

Trade flying over a thousand seas with
her spice and her vintage, her
silk and her corn;
Desolate offing, sailorless harbors,
famishing populace, wharves
forlorn;

VIII

Star of the morning, Hope in the sun-
rise; gloom of the evening, Life
at a close;
Pleasure who flaunts on her wide down-
way with her flying robe and
her poison'd rose;

IX

Pain, that has crawl'd from the corpse
of Pleasure, a worm which
writhes all day, and at night
Stirs up again in the heart of the
sleeper, and stings him back to
the curse of the light;

X

Wealth with his wines and his wedded
harlots; honest Poverty, bare
to the bone;
Opulent Avarice, lean as Poverty;
Flattery gilding the rift in a
throne;

XI

Fame blowing out from her golden
trumpet a jubilant challenge to
Time and to Fate;
Slander, her shadow, sowing the nettle
on all the laurell'd graves of
the great;

XII

Love for the maiden, crown'd with
marriage, no regrets for aught
that has been,
Household happiness, gracious chil-
dren, debtless competence, gold-
en mean;

XIII

National hatreds of whole generations,
and pigmy spite of the village
spire;
Vows that will last to the last death-
ruckle, and vows that are snapt
in a moment of fire;

XIV

He that has lived for the lust of the
minute, and died in the doing
it, flesh without mind;
He that has nail'd all flesh to the
Cross, till Self died out in the
love of his kind;

XV

Spring and Summer and Autumn and
Winter, and all these old revolu-
tions of earth;
All new-old revolutions of Empire —
change of the tide — what is all
of it worth?

XVI

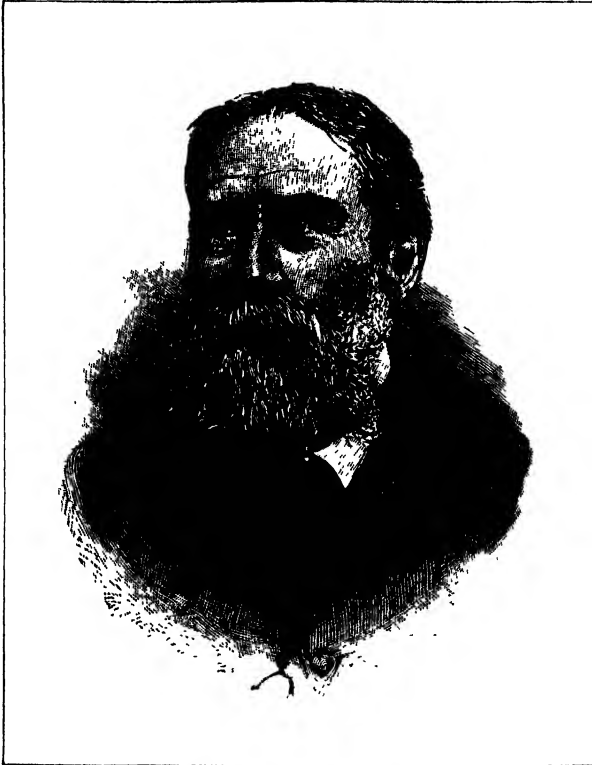
What the philosophies, all the sciences,
poesy, varying voices of prayer,
All that is noblest, all that is basest,
all that is filthy with all that is
fair?

XVII

What is it all, if we all of us end but
in being our own corpse-coffins
at last?
Swallow'd in Vastness, lost in Silence,
drown'd in the depths of a mean-
ingless Past?

XVIII

What but a murmur of gnats in the
gloom, or a moment's anger of
bees in their hive? —
Peace, let it be! for I loved him, and
love him for ever: the dead
are not dead but alive.



JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL

THE RING

Dedicated to the Hon. J. Russell Lowell

MIRIAM AND HER FATHER

MIRIAM (*singing*).

MELLOW moon of heaven,
Bright in blue,
Moon of married hearts,
Hear me, you !

Twelve times in the year
Bring me bliss,
Globing honey moons
Bright as this.

Moon, you fade at times
From the night.
Young again you grow
Out of sight.

16

Silver crescent-curve,
Coming soon,
Globe again, and make
Honey moon.

Shall not *my* love last,
Moon, with you,
For ten thousand years
Old and new ?

20

FATHER.

And who was he with such love-
drunken eyes

They made a thousand honey moons
of one ?

MIRIAM.

The prophet of his own, my Hubert
—his
The words, and mine the setting.
'Air and words,'
Said Hubert, when I sang the song,
'are bride
And bridegroom.' Does it please you ?

FATHER.

Mainly, child,
Because I hear your mother's voice in
yours.
She —, why, you shiver tho' the wind
is west
With all the warmth of summer.

MIRIAM.

Well, I felt
On a sudden I know not what, a
breath that past 30
With all the cold of winter.

FATHER (*muttering to himself*).

Even so.
The Ghost in Man, the Ghost that
once was Man,
But cannot wholly free itself from
Man,
Are calling to each other thro' a dawn
Stranger than earth has ever seen;
the veil
Is rending, and the Voices of the
day
Are heard across the Voices of the
dark.
No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell,
for man,
But thro' the Will of One who knows
and rules—
And utter knowledge is but utter
love— 40
Æonian Evolution, swift or slow,
Thro' all the spheres—an ever open-
ing height,
An ever lessening earth—and she
perhaps,
My Miriam, breaks her latest earthly
link
With me to-day.

MIRIAM.

You speak so low; what is it ?

Your 'Miriam breaks'—is making a
new link
Breaking an old one ?

FATHER.

No, for we, my child,
Have been till now each other's all-in-
all.

MIRIAM.

And you the lifelong guardian of the
child.

FATHER.

I, and one other whom you have not
known. 50

MIRIAM.

And who? what other ?

FATHER.

Whither are you bound ?
For Naples which we only left in
May ?

MIRIAM.

No, father, Spain, but Hubert brings
me home
With April and the swallow. Wish
me joy !

FATHER.

What need to wish when Hubert weds
in you
The heart of love, and you the soul
of truth
In Hubert ?

MIRIAM.

Tho' you used to call me once
The lonely maiden princess of the
wood,
Who meant to sleep her hundred sum-
mers out
Before a kiss should wake her.

FATHER.

Ay, but now
Your fairy prince has found you, take
this ring. 60

MIRIAM.

'To t' amo'—and these diamonds—
beautiful !
'From Walter,' and for me from you
then ?

FATHER.
Well,
One way for Miriam.

MIRIAM.
Miriam am I not ?

FATHER.
This ring bequeath'd you by your
mother, child,
Was to be given you — such her dying
wish —
Given on the morning when you came
of age
Or on the day you married. Both the
days
Now close in one. The ring is doubly
yours.
Why do you look so gravely at the
tower? 70

MIRIAM.
I never saw it yet so all ablaze
With creepers crimsoning to the pin-
nacles,
As if perpetual sunset linger'd there,
And all ablaze too in the lake below !
And how the birds that circle round
the tower
Are cheeping to each other of their
flight
To summer lands!

FATHER.
And that has made you grave ?
Fly — care not. Birds and brides must
leave the nest. 78
Child, I am happier in your happiness
Than in mine own.

MIRIAM.
It is not that !

FATHER.
What else ?

MIRIAM.
That chamber in the tower.

FATHER.
What chamber, child ?
Your nurse is here ?

MIRIAM.
My mother's nurse and mine.
She comes to dress me in my bridal
veil. 83

FATHER.
What did she say ?

MIRIAM.
She said that you and I
Had been abroad for my poor health
so long
She fear'd I had forgotten her, and I
ask'd
About my mother, and she said, 'Thy
hair
Is golden like thy mother's, not so
fine.'

FATHER.
What then ? what more ?

MIRIAM.
She said — perhaps indeed
She wander'd, having wander'd now
so far 90
Beyond the common date of death —
that you,
When I was smaller than the statuette,
Of my dear mother on your bracket
here —
You took me to that chamber in the
tower,
The topmost — a chest there, by which
you knelt —
And there were books and dresses —
left to me,
A ring too which you kiss'd, and I,
she said,
I babbled, 'Mother, mother' — as I
used
To prattle to her picture — stretch'd
my hands
As if I saw her; then a woman
came 100
And caught me from my nurse. I
hear her yet —
A sound of anger like a distant storm.

FATHER.
Garrulous old crone !

MIRIAM.
Poor nurse !

FATHER.
I bade her keep,
Like a seal'd book, all mention of the
ring,
For I myself would tell you all to-day

MIRIAM.

'She too might speak to-day,' she
mumbled. Still,
I scarce have learnt the title of your
book,
But you will turn the pages.

FATHER.

Ay, to-day!

I brought you to that chamber on
your third
September birthday with your nurse,
and felt¹¹⁰
An icy breath play on me, while I
stooped
To take and kiss the ring.

MIRIAM,

This very ring,

'Io t' amo?'

FATHER.

Yes, for some wild hope was mine
That, in the misery of my married
life,
Miriam your mother might appear to
me.
She came to you, not me. The storm
you hear
Far-off is Muriel — your stepmother's
voice.

MIRIAM.

Vext, that you thought my mother
came to me?
Or at my crying, 'Mother'? or to find
My mother's diamonds hidden from
her there,¹²⁰
Like worldly beauties in the cell, not
shown
To dazzle all that see them?

FATHER.

Wait a while.

Your mother and stepmother — Miriam
Erne
And Muriel Erne — the two were cou-
sins — lived
With Muriel's mother on the down,
that sees
A thousand squares of corn and mea-
dow, far
As the gray deep, a landscape which
your eyes
Have many a time ranged over when
a babe.

MIRIAM.

I climb'd the hill with Hubert, yester-
day,
And from the thousand squares, one
silent voice¹³⁰
Came on the wind, and seem'd to say,
'Again.'
We saw far off an old forsaken house,
Then home, and past the ruin'd mill.

FATHER.

And there

I found these cousins often by the
brook,
For Miriam sketch'd and Muriel threw
the fly;
The girls of equal age, but one was
fair,
And one was dark, and both were
beautiful.
No voice for either spoke within my
heart
Then, for the surface eye, that only
dotes
On outward beauty, glancing from the
one¹⁴⁰
To the other, knew not that which
pleased it most,
The raven ringlet or the gold; but
both
Were dowerless, and myself, I used to
walk
This terrace — morbid, melancholy;
mine
And yet not mine the hall, the farm,
the field;
For all that ample woodland whisper'd,
'Debt,'
The brook that feeds this lakelet mur-
mur'd, 'Debt,'
And in yon arching avenue of old
elms,
Tho' mine, not mine, I heard the sober
rook¹⁴⁹
And carrion crow cry, 'Mortgage.'

MIRIAM.

Father's fault

Visited on the children!

FATHER.

Ay, but then

A kinsman, dying, summon'd me to
Rome —
He left me wealth — and while I jour-
ney'd hence,

And saw the world fly by me like a dream,
 And while I communed with my truest self,
 I woke to all of truest in myself,
 Till, in the gleam of those midsummer dawns,
 The form of Muriel faded, and the face
 Of Miriam grew upon me, till I knew;
 And past and future mixt in heaven
 and made ¹⁶⁰
 The rosy twilight of a perfect day.

MIRIAM.

So glad? no tear for him who left you
 wealth,
 Your kinsman?

FATHER.

I had seen the man but once;
 He loved my name, not me; and then
 I pass'd
 Home, and thro' Venice, where a jew-
 eller,
 So far gone down, or so far up in life,
 That he was nearing his own hundred,
 sold
 This ring to me, then laugh'd, 'The
 ring is weird.'
 And weird and worn and wizard-like
 was he.
 'Why weird?' I ask'd him; and he
 said, 'The souls ¹⁷⁰
 Of two repentant lovers guard the
 ring;'
 Then with a ribald twinkle in his bleak
 eyes —
 'And if you give the ring to any maid,
 They still remember what it cost them
 here,
 And bind the maid to love you by the
 ring;
 And if the ring were stolen from the
 maid,
 The theft were death or madness to
 the thief,
 So sacred those ghost lovers hold the
 gift.'
 And then he told their legend:
 'Long ago
 Two lovers parted by a scurrilous
 tale
 Had quarrell'd, till the man repenting
 sent ¹⁸¹
 This ring, "Io t' amo," to his best be-
 loved,

And sent it on her birthday. She in
 wrath
 Return'd it on her birthday, and that
 day
 His death-day, when, half-frenzied by
 the ring,
 He wildly fought a rival suitor, him
 The causer of that scandal, fought and
 fell;
 And she that came to part them all too
 late,
 And found a corpse and silence, drew
 the ring
 From his dead finger, wore it till her
 death, ¹⁹⁰
 Shrin'd him within the temple of her
 heart,
 Made every moment of her after life
 A virgin victim to his memory,
 And dying rose, and rear'd her arms,
 and cried,
 "I see him, Io t' amo, Io t' amo."

MIRIAM.

Legend or true? so tender should be
 true!
 Did *he* believe it? did you ask him?

FATHER.

Ay!
 But that half skeleton, like a barren
 ghost
 From out the fleshless world of spirits,
 laugh'd —
 A hollow laughter!

MIRIAM.

Vile, so near the ghost
 Himself, to laugh at love in death!
 But you? ²⁰¹

FATHER.

Well, as the bygone lover thro' this
 ring
 Had sent his cry for her forgiveness, I
 Would call thro' this 'Io t' amo' to the
 heart
 Of Miriam; then I bade the man en-
 grave
 'From Walter' on the ring, and sent it
 — wrote
 Name, surname, all as clear as noon,
 but he —
 Some younger hand must have engra-
 ven the ring —
 His fingers were so stiffen'd by the frost

Of seven and ninety winters, that he
 scrawl'd²¹⁰
 A 'Miriam' that might seem a 'Muriel';
 And Muriel claim'd and open'd what I
 meant
 For Miriam, took the ring, and flaunted
 it
 Before that other whom I loved and
 love.

A mountain stay'd me here, a min-
 ister there,
 A galleried palace, or a battle-field,
 Where stood the sheaf of Peace: but
 — coming home —
 And on your mother's birthday — all
 but yours —
 A week betwixt — and when the tower
 as now
 Was all ablaze with crimson to the
 roof,²²⁰
 And all ablaze too plunging in the lake
 Head-foremost — who were those that
 stood between
 The tower and that rich phantom of
 the tower?
 Muriel and Miriam, each in white, and
 like
 May-blossoms in mid-autumn — was it
 they?
 A light shot upward on them from the
 lake.
 What sparkled there? whose hand
 was that? they stood
 So close together. I am not keen of
 sight,
 But coming nearer — Muriel had the
 ring —
 'O Miriam! have you given your ring
 to her?'²³⁰
 O Miriam! Miriam redden'd, Muriel
 clench'd
 The hand that wore it, till I cried
 again:
 'O Miriam, if you love me take the
 ring!'
 She glanced at me, at Muriel, and was
 mute.
 'Nay, if you cannot love me, let it be.'
 Then — Muriel standing ever statue-
 like —
 She turn'd, and in her soft imperial
 way
 And saying gently, 'Muriel, by your
 leave,'

Unclosed the hand and from it drew
 the ring,
 And gave it me, who pass'd it down
 her own,²⁴⁰
 'Io t' amo, all is well then.' Muriel
 fled.

MIRIAM.

Poor Muriel!

FATHER.

Ay, poor Muriel, when you hear
 What follows! Miriam loved me from
 the first,
 Not thro' the ring; but on her mar-
 riage-morn
 This birthday, death-day, and be-
 trothal ring,
 Laid on her table overnight, was gone;
 And after hours of search and doubt
 and threats,
 And hubbub, Muriel enter'd with it,
 'See! —
 Found in a chink of that old moul-
 der'd floor!'
 My Miriam nodded with a pitying
 smile,²⁵⁰
 As who should say that 'those who
 lose can find.'
 Then I and she were married for a
 year,
 One year without a storm, or even a
 cloud;
 And you, my Miriam, born within the
 year;
 And she, my Miriam, dead within the
 year.
 I sat beside her dying, and she
 gaspt:
 'The books, the miniature, the lace
 are hers,
 My ring too when she comes of age,
 or when
 She marries; you — you loved me,
 kept your word.
 You love me still, "Io t' amo." —
 Muriel — no —²⁶⁰
 She cannot love; she loves her own
 hard self.
 Her firm will, her fix'd purpose. Pro-
 mise me,
 Miriam, not Muriel — she shall have
 the ring.'
 And there the light of other life, which
 lives
 Beyond our burial and our buried eyes,

Gleam'd for a moment in her own on
earth.
I swore the vow, then with my latest
kiss
Upon them, closed her eyes, which
would not close,
But kept their watch upon the ring
and you.
Your birthday was her death-day.

MIRIAM.

O poor mother !
And you, poor desolate father, and
poor me, ²⁷¹
The little senseless, worthless, word-
less babe,
Saved when your life was wreck'd !

FATHER.

Desolate ? yes !
Desolate as that sailor whom the
storm
Had parted from his comrade in the
boat,
And dash'd half dead on barren sands,
was I.
Nay, you were my one solace ; only
— you
Were always ailing. Muriel's mo-
ther, sent,
And sure am I, by Muriel, one day
came
And saw you, shook her head, and
patted yours, ²⁸⁰
And smiled, and making with a kindly
pinch
Each poor pale cheek a momentary
rose —
'That should be fix'd,' she said ; 'your
pretty bud,
So blighted here, would flower into
full health
Among our heath and bracken. Let
her come !
And we will feed her with our moun-
tain air,
And send her home to you rejoicing.'
No —
We could not part. And once, when
you, my girl,
Rode on my shoulder home — the tiny
fist
Had graspt a daisy from your mo-
ther's grave — ²⁹⁰
By the lych-gate was Muriel. 'Ay,'
she said,

'Among the tombs in this damp vale
of yours !
You scorn my mother's warning, but
the child
Is paler than before. We often walk
In open sun, and see beneath our
feet
The mist of autumn gather from your
lake,
And shroud the tower ; and once we
only saw
Your gilded vane, a light above the
mist' —
Our old bright bird that still is veer-
ing there
Above his four gold letters — 'and the
light,' ³⁰⁰
She said, 'was like that light' — and
there she paused,
And long ; till I, believing that the
girl's
Lean fancy, groping for it, could not
find
One likeness, laugh'd a little and found
her two —
'A warrior's crest above the cloud of
war' —
'A fiery phoenix rising from the smoke,
The pyre he burnt in.' — 'Nay,' she
said, 'the light
That glimmers on the marsh and on
the grave.'
And spoke no more, but turn'd and
past away.

Miriam, I am not surely one of those
Caught by the flower that closes on
the fly, ³¹¹
But after ten slow weeks her fix'd in-
tent,
In aiming at an all but hopeless mark
To strike it, struck. I took, I left
you there ;
I came, I went, was happier day by
day ;
For Muriel nursed you with a mo-
ther's care ;
Till on that clear and heather-scented
height
The rounder cheek had brighten'd into
bloom.
She always came to meet me carrying
you,
And all her talk was of the babe she
loved ; ³²⁰
So, following her old pastime of the
brook,

She threw the fly for me; but oftener
 left
 That angling to the mother. 'Muri-
 el's health
 Had weaken'd, nursing little Miriam.
 Strange!
 She used to shun the wailing babe,
 and dotes
 On this of yours.' But when the ma-
 tron saw
 That hinted love was only wasted
 bait,
 Not risen to, she was bolder. 'Ever
 since
 You sent the fatal ring'—I told her
 'sent
 To Miriam,' 'Doubtless—ay, but ever
 since
 In all the world my dear one sees but
 you—
 In your sweet babe she finds but you
 —she makes
 Her heart a mirror that reflects but
 you.'
 And then the tear fell, the voice broke.
 Her heart!
 I gazed into the mirror, as a man
 Who sees his face in water, and a
 stone,
 That glances from the bottom of the
 pool,
 Strike upward thro' the shadow; yet
 at last,
 Gratitude—loneliness—desire to keep
 So skilled a nurse about you always
 —nay!
 Some half remorseful kind of pity
 too—
 Well! well, you know I married Mu-
 riel Erne.
 'I take thee Muriel for my wedded
 wife'—
 I had forgotten it was your birthday,
 child—
 When all at once with some electric
 thrill
 A cold air pass'd between us, and the
 hands
 Fell from each other, and were join'd
 again.
 No second cloudless honeymoon was
 mine.
 For by and by she sicken'd of the
 farce,
 She dropt the gracious mask of mo-
 therhood,
350

She came no more to meet me, carry
 ing you,
 Nor ever cared to set you on her knee,
 Nor ever let you gambol in her sight,
 Nor ever cheer'd you with a kindly
 smile,
 Nor ever ceased to clamor for the
 ring;
 Why had I sent the ring at first to
 her?
 Why had I made her love 'me thro' the
 ring,
 And then had changed? so fickle are
 men—the best!
 Not she—but now my love was hers
 again,
 The ring by right, she said, was hers
 again.
 At times too shrilling in her angrier
 moods,
 'That weak and watery nature love
 you? No!
 "Io t' amo, Io t' amo"!' I flung her-
 self
 Against my heart, but often while her
 lips
 Were warm upon my cheek, an icy
 breath,
 As from the grating of a sepulchre,
 Past over both. I told her of my vow,
 No pliable idiot I to break my vow;
 But still she made her outcry for the
 ring;
 For one monotonous fancy madden'd
 her,
 Till I myself was madden'd with her
 cry,
 And even that 'Io t' amo,' those three
 sweet
 Italian words, became a weariness.
 My people too were scared with
 eerie sounds,
 A footstep, a low throbbing in the
 walls,
 A noise of falling weights that never
 fell,
 Weird whispers, bells that rang with-
 out a hand,
 Door-handles turn'd when none was
 at the door,
 And bolted doors that open'd of them-
 selves;
 And one betwixt the dark and light
 had seen
 Her, bending by the cradle of her
 babe.
380

MIRIAM.

And I remember once that being waked
 By noises in the house—and no one
 near—
 I cried for nurse, and felt a gentle
 hand
 Fall on my forehead, and a sudden
 face
 Look'd in upon me like a gleam and
 pass'd,
 And I was quieted, and slept again.
 Or is it some half memory of a dream?

FATHER.

Your fifth September birthday.

MIRIAM.

And the face,
 The hand,—my mother.

FATHER.

Miriam, on that day
 Two lovers parted by no scurrilous
 tale—
 Mere want of gold—and still for
 twenty years
 Bound by the golden cord of their
 first love—
 Had ask'd us to their marriage, and
 to share
 Their marriage-banquet. Muriel, paler
 then
 Than ever you were in your cradle,
 moan'd,
 'I am fitter for my bed, or for my
 grave,
 I cannot go, go you.' And then she
 rose,
 She clung to me with such a hard em-
 brace,
 So lingeringly long, that half-amaz'd
 I parted from her, and I went alone.
 And when the bridegroom murmur'd,
 'With this ring,'
 I felt for what I could not find, the
 key,
 The guardian of her relics, of *her* ring.
 I kept it as a sacred amulet
 About me,—gone! and gone in that
 embrace!
 Then, hurrying home, I found her
 not in house
 Or garden—up the tower—an icy
 air
 Fled by me.—There, the chest was
 open—all

The sacred relics tost about the
 floor—
 Among them Muriel lying on her
 face—
 I raised her, call'd her, 'Muriel, Mu-
 riel, wake!'
 The fatal ring lay near her; the glazed
 eye
 Glared at me as in horror. Dead! I
 took
 And chafed the freezing hand. A red
 mark ran
 All round one finger pointed straight,
 the rest
 Were crumpled inwards. Dead!—
 and maybe stung
 With some remorse, had stolen, worn
 the ring—
 Then torn it from her finger, or as
 if—
 For never had I seen her show re-
 morse
 As if—

MIRIAM.

—those two ghost lovers—

FATHER.

Lovers yet—

MIRIAM.

Yes, yes!

FATHER.

—but dead so long, gone up so far,
 That now their ever-rising life has
 dwarf'd
 Or lost the moment of their past on
 earth,
 As we forget our wail at being born—
 As if—

MIRIAM.

—a dearer ghost had—

FATHER.

—wrench'd it away.

MIRIAM.

Had floated in with sad reproachful
 eyes,
 Till from her own hand she had torn
 the ring
 In fright, and fallen dead. And I
 myself
 Am half afraid to wear it.

FATHER.

Well, no more!
 No bridal music this! but fear not
 you! ⁴³¹
 You have the ring she guarded; that
 poor link
 With earth is broken, and has left her
 free,
 Except that, still drawn downward
 for an hour,
 Her spirit hovering by the church,
 where she
 Was married too, may linger, till she
 sees
 Her maiden coming like a queen, who
 leaves
 Some colder province in the North to
 gain
 Her capital city, where the loyal bells
 Clash welcome — linger, till her own,
 the babe ⁴⁴⁰
 She lean'd to from her spiritual sphere,
 Her lonely maiden princess, crowned
 with flowers,
 Has enter'd on the larger woman-world
 Of wives and mothers.

But the bridal veil —
 Your nurse is waiting. Kiss me,
 child, and go.

FORLORN

I

'He is fled — I wish him dead —
 He that wrought my ruin —
 O, the flattery and the craft
 Which were my undoing —
 In the night, in the night,
 When the storms are blowing.

II

'Who was witness of the crime?
 Who shall now reveal it?
 He is fled, or he is dead,
 Marriage will conceal it — ¹⁰
 In the night, in the night,
 While the gloom is growing.'

III

Catherine, Catherine, in the night,
 What is this you're dreaming?
 There is laughter down in hell
 At your simple scheming —
 In the night, in the night,
 When the ghosts are fleeing.

IV

You to place a hand in his
 Like an honest woman's, ²⁸
 You that lie with wasted lungs
 Waiting for your summons —
 In the night, O, the night!
 O, the deathwatch beating!

V

There will come a witness soon
 Hard to be confuted,
 All the world will hear a voice
 Scream you are polluted —
 In the night! O, the night,
 When the owls are wailing! ³⁰

VI

Shame and marriage, shame and mar-
 riage,
 Fright and foul dissembling,
 Bantering bridesman, reddening priest,
 Tower and altar trembling —
 In the night, O, the night,
 When the mind is failing!

VII

Mother, dare you kill your child?
 How your hand is shaking!
 Daughter of the seed of Cain,
 What is this you're taking? — ⁴⁰
 In the night, O, the night,
 While the house is sleeping.

VIII

Dreadful! has it come to this,
 O unhappy creature?
 You that would not tread on a worm
 For your gentle nature —
 In the night, O, the night,
 O, the night of weeping!

IX

Murder would not veil your sin,
 Marriage will not hide it, ⁵⁰
 Earth and Hell will brand your name.
 Wretch, you must abide it —
 In the night, O, the night,
 Long before the dawning.

X

Up, get up, and tell him all,
 Tell him you were lying!
 Do not die with a lie in your mouth,
 You that know you're dying —
 In the night, O, the night,
 While the grave is yawning. ⁶⁰

XI

No—you will not die before,
 Tho' you'll ne'er be stronger;
 You will live till *that* is born,
 Then a little longer —
 In the night, O, the night,
 While the Fiend is prowling.

XII

Death and marriage, death and marriage!

Funeral hearses rolling!
 Black with bridal favors mixt!
 Bridal bells with tolling! — 70
 In the night, O, the night,
 When the wolves are howling.

XIII

Up, get up, the time is short,
 Tell him now or never!
 Tell him all before you die,
 Lest you die for ever —
 In the night, O, the night,
 Where there's no forgetting.

XIV

Up she got, and wrote him all, 80
 All her tale of sadness,
 Blister'd every word with tears,
 And eased her heart of madness —
 In the night, and nigh the dawn,
 And while the moon was setting.

HAPPY

THE LEPER'S BRIDE

I

WHY wail you, pretty plover? and
 what is it that you fear?
 Is he sick, your mate, like mine?
 have you lost him, is he fled?
 And there — the heron rises from his
 watch beside the mere,
 And flies above the leper's hut,
 where lives the living-dead.

II

Come back, nor let me know it! would
 he live and die alone?
 And has he not forgiven me yet, his
 over-jealous bride,
 Who am, and was, and will be his,
 his own and only own,
 To share his living death with him,
 die with him side by side?

III

Is that the leper's hut on the solitary
 moor,
 Where noble Ulric dwells forlorn,
 and wears the leper's weed? 10
 The door is open. He! is he standing
 at the door,
 My soldier of the Cross? it is he,
 and he indeed!

IV

My roses — will he take them *now* —
 mine, his — from off the tree
 We planted both together, happy in
 our marriage morn?
 O God, I could blaspheme, for he
 fought Thy fight for Thee,
 And Thou hast made him leper to
 compass him with scorn —

V

Hast spared the flesh of thousands, the
 coward and the base,
 And set a crueller mark than Cain's
 on him, the good and brave!
 He sees me, waves me from him. I
 will front him face to face.
 You need not wave me from you.
 I would leap into your grave. 20

VI

My warrior of the Holy Cross and of
 the conquering sword,
 The roses that you cast aside — once
 more I bring you these.
 No nearer? do you scorn me when
 you tell me, O my lord,
 You would not mar the beauty of
 your bride with your disease?

VII

You say your body is so foul — then
 here I stand apart,
 Who yearn to lay my loving head
 upon your leprous breast.
 The leper plague may scale my skin,
 but never taint my heart;
 Your body is not foul to me, and
 body is foul at best.

VIII

I loved you first when young and fair,
 but now I love you most;
 The fairest flesh at last is filth on
 which the worm will feast; 30

This poor rib-grated dungeon of the
holy human ghost,
This house with all its hateful needs
no cleaner than the beast,

IX

This coarse diseaseful creature which
in Eden was divine,
This Satan-baunted ruin, this little
city of sewers,
This wall of solid flesh that comes be-
tween your soul and mine,
Will vanish and give place to the
beauty that endures,

X

The beauty that endures on the Spirit-
ual height,
When we shall stand transfigured,
like Christ on Hermon hill,
And moving each to music, soul in
soul and light in light,
Shall flash thro' one another in a
moment as we will. 40

XI

Foul ! foul ! the word was yours not
mine, I worship that right hand
Which fell'd the foes before you as
the woodman fells the wood,
And sway'd the sword that lighten'd
back the sun of Holy Land,
And clove the Moslem crescent
moon, and changed it into blood.

XII

And once I worshipt all too well this
creature of decay,
For age will chink the face, and
death will freeze the supplest
limbs—
Yet you in your mid manhood—O,
the grief when yesterday
They bore the Cross before you to
the chant of funeral hymns!

XIII

Libera me, Domine !' you sang the
Psalm, and when
The priest pronounced you dead,
and flung the mould upon your
feet, 50
A beauty came upon your face, not
that of living men,
But seen upon the silent brow when
life has ceased to beat.

XIV

'Libera nos, Domine'—you knew not
one was there
Who saw you kneel beside your
bier, and weeping scarce could
see ;
May I come a little nearer, I that
heard, and changed the prayer
And sang the married 'nos' for the
solitary 'me'?

XV

My beauty marred by you ? by you !
so be it. All is well
If I lose it and myself in the higher
beauty, yours.
My beauty lured that falcon from his
eyry on the fell,
Who never caught one gleam of the
beauty which endures— 60

XVI

The Count who sought to snap the
bond that link'd us life to life,
Who whisper'd me, 'Your Ulric
loves'—a little nearer still—
He hiss'd, 'Let us revenge ourselves,
your Ulric woos my wife'—
A lie by which he thought he could
subdue me to his will.

XVII

I knew that you were near me when
I let him kiss my brow ;
Did he touch me on the lips ? I was
jealous, anger'd, vain,
And I meant to make *you* jealous. Are
you jealous of me now ?
Your pardon, O my love, if I ever
gave you pain!

XVIII

You never once accused me, but I
wept alone, and sigh'd
In the winter of the present for the
summer of the past ; 70
That icy winter silence—how it froze
you from your bride,
Tho' I made one barren effort to
break it at the last !

XIX

I brought you, you remember, these
roses, when I knew
You were parting for the war, and
you took them tho' you frown'd;

You frown'd and yet you kiss'd them.
 All at once the trumpet blew,
 And you spurr'd your fiery horse,
 and you hurl'd them to the
 ground.

XX

You parted for the Holy War without
 a word to me,
 And clear myself unask'd — not I.
 My nature was too proud.
 And him I saw but once again, and
 far away was he,
 When I was praying in a storm —
 the crash was long and loud —

XXI

That God would ever slant His bolt
 from falling on your head — s.
 Then I lifted up my eyes, he was
 coming down the fell —
 I clapt my hands. The sudden fire
 from heaven had dash'd him
 dead,
 And sent him char'd and blasted to
 the deathless fire of hell.

XXII

See, I sinn'd but for a moment. I re-
 pent and repent,
 And trust myself forgiven by the
 God to whom I kneel.
 A little nearer? Yes. I shall hardly
 be content
 Till I be leper like yourself, my
 love, from head to heel.

XXIII

O foolish dreams, that you, that I,
 would slight our marriage oath!
 I held you at that moment even
 dearer than before; 90
 Now God has made you leper in His
 loving care for both,
 That we might cling together, never
 doubt each other more.

XXIV

The priest, who join'd you to the
 dead, has join'd our hands of
 old;
 If man and wife be but one flesh,
 let mine be leprous too,

As dead from all the human race as if
 beneath the mould;
 If you be dead, then I am dead,
 who only live for you.

XXV

Would Earth tho' hid in cloud not be
 follow'd by the Moon?
 The leech forsake the dying bed for
 terror of his life?
 The shadow leave the Substance in
 the brooding light of noon?
 Or if I had been the leper would
 you have left the wife? 100

XXVI

Not take them? Still you wave me
 off — poor roses — must I go —
 I have worn them year by year —
 from the bush we both had
 set —
 What? fling them to you? — well —
 that were hardly gracious. No!
 Your plague but passes by the
 touch. A little nearer yet!

XXVII

There, there! he buried you, the
 priest; the priest is not to
 blame,
 He joins us once again, to his either
 office true.
 I thank him. I am happy, happy.
 Kiss me. In the name
 Of the everlasting God, I will live
 and die with you!

[Dean Milman has remarked that the protection and care afforded by the Church to this blighted race of lepers was among the most beautiful of its offices during the Middle Ages. The leprosy of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was supposed to be a legacy of the Crusades, but was in all probability the offspring of meagre and unwholesome diet, miserable lodging and clothing, physical and moral degradation. The services of the Church in the seclusion of these unhappy sufferers were most affecting. The stern duty of looking to the public welfare is tempered with exquisite compassion for the victims of this loathsome disease. The ritual for the sequestration of the leprous differed little from the burial service. After the leper had been sprinkled with holy water, the priest con-

ducted him into the church, the leper singing the psalm 'Libera me, Domine,' and the crucifix and bearer going before. In the church a black cloth was stretched over two trestles in front of the altar, and the leper leaning at its side devoutly heard mass. The priest, taking up a little earth in his cloak, threw it on one of the leper's feet, and put him out of the church, if it did not rain too heavily; took him to his hut in the midst of the fields, and then uttered the prohibitions: 'I forbid you entering the church . . . or entering the company of others. I forbid you quitting your home without your leper's dress.' He concluded: 'Take this dress, and wear it in token of humility; take these gloves, take this clapper, as a sign that you are forbidden to speak to any one. You are not to be indignant at being thus separated from others, and as to your little wants, good people will provide for you, and God will not desert you.' Then in this old ritual follow these sad words: 'When it shall come to pass that the leper shall pass out of this world, he shall be buried in his hut, and not in the churchyard.' At first there was a doubt whether wives should follow their husbands who had been leprous, or remain in the world and marry again. The Church decided that the marriage-tie was indissoluble, and so bestowed on these unhappy beings this immense source of consolation. With a love stronger than this living death, lepers were followed into banishment from the haunts of men by their faithful wives. Readers of Sir J. Stephen's 'Essays on Ecclesiastical Biography' will recollect the description of the founder of the Franciscan order, how, controlling his involuntary disgust, Saint Francis of Assisi washed the feet and dressed the sores of the lepers, once at least reverently applying his lips to their wounds. — BOURCHIER-JAMES.]

This ceremony of *quasi*-burial varied considerably at different times and in different places. In some cases a grave was dug, and the leper's face was often covered during the service.

TO ULYSSES

I

ULYSSES, much-experienced man,
Whose eyes have known this globe
of ours,
Her tribes of men, and trees, and
flowers,
From Corrientes to Japan,

II

To you that bask below the Line,
I soaking here in winter wet —
The century's three strong eights
have met
To drag me down to seventy-nine

III

In summer if I reach my day —
To you, yet young, who breathe the
balm
Of summer-winters by the palm
And orange grove of Paraguay,

IV

I, tolerant of the colder time,
Who love the winter woods, to trace
On paler heavens the branching
grace
Of leafless elm, or naked lime,

V

And see my cedar green, and there
My giant ilex keeping leaf
When frost is keen and days are
brief —
Or marvel how in English air

VI

My yucca, which no winter quells,
Altho' the months have scarce be-
gun,
Has push'd toward our faintest sun
A spike of half-accomplish'd bells —

VII

Or watch the waving pine which here
The warrior of Caprera set,¹
A name that earth will not forget
Till earth has roll'd her latest year —

VIII

I, once half-crazed for larger light
On broader zones beyond the foam,
But chaining fancy now at home
Among the quarried downs of Wight,

IX

Not less would yield full thanks to you
For your rich gift, your tale of lands
I know not,² your Arabian sands;
Your cane, your palm, tree-fern, bam-
boo,

¹ Garibaldi said to me, alluding to his barren island, 'I wish I had your trees.'

² The tale of Nejd.

X

The wealth of tropic bower and brake ;
Your Oriental Eden-isles,¹
Where man, nor only Nature smiles ;
Your wonder of the boiling lake ;²

XI

Phra-Chai, the Shadow of the Best,³
Phra-bat⁴ the step ; your Pontic
coast ;
Crag-cloister ;⁵ Anatolian Ghost ;⁶
Hong-Kong,⁷ Karnac,⁸ and all the
rest ;

XII

Thro' which I follow'd line by line
Your leading hand, and came, my
friend,
To prize your various book, and
send
A gift of slenderer value, mine.

TO MARY BOYLE

WITH THE FOLLOWING POEM

I

'SPRING-FLOWERS' ! While you still
delay to take
Your leave of town,
Our elm-tree's ruddy-hearted blossom-
flake
Is fluttering down.

II

Be truer to your promise. There ! I
heard
Our cuckoo call.
Be needle to the magnet of your word,
Nor wait, till all

¹ The Philippines. ² In Dominica.

³ The Shadow of the Lord. Certain obscure markings on a rock in Siam, which express the image of Buddha to the Buddhist more or less distinctly according to his faith and his moral worth.

⁴ The footstep of the Lord on another rock.

⁵ The monastery of Sumelas.

⁶ Anatolian spectre stories.

⁷ The three cities.

⁸ Travels in Egypt.

III

Our vernal bloom from every vale and
plain
And garden pass,
And all the gold from each laburnum
chain
Drop to the grass.

IV

Is memory with your Marian gone to
rest,
Dead with the dead ?
For ere she left us, when we met, you
prest
My hand, and said

V

'I come with your spring-flowers.'
You came not, friend ;
My birds would sing,
You heard not. Take then this spring
flower I send,
This song of spring,

VI

Found yesterday — forgotten mine
own rhyme
By mine old self,
As I shall be forgotten by old Time,
Laid on the shelf —

VII

A rhyme that flower'd betwixt the
whitening sloe
And kingcup blaze,
And more than half a hundred years
ago,
In rick-fire days,

VIII

When Dives loathed the times, and
paced his land
In fear of worse,
And sanguine Lazarus felt a vacant
hand
Fill with *his* purse.

IX

For lowly minds were madden'd to the
height
By tonguester tricks,
And once — I well remember that red
night
When thirty ricks,

X

All flaming, made an English home-
stead hell —
These hands of mine
Have helpt to pass a bucket from the
well
Along the line,

XI

When this bare dome had not begun
to gleam
Thro' youthful curls,
And you were then a lover's fairy
dream,
His girl of girls ;

XII

And you, that now are lonely, and
with Grief
Sit face to face,
Might find a flickering glimmer of re-
lief
In change of place.

XIII

What use to brood ? This life of min-
gled pains
And joys to me,
Despite of every Faith and Creed, re-
mains
The Mystery.

XIV

Let golden youth bewail the friend,
the wife,
For ever gone.
He dreams of that long walk thro' de-
sert life
Without the one.

XV

The silver year should cease to mourn
and sigh —
Not long to wait —
So close are we, dear Mary, you and I,
To that dim gate.

XVI

Take, read ! and be the faults your
Poet makes
Or many or few,
He rests content, if his young music
wakes
A wish in you

XVII

To change our dark Queen-city, all her
realm
Of sound and smoke,
For his clear heaven, and these few
lanes of elm
And whispering oak.

THE PROGRESS OF SPRING

I

THE ground-flame of the crocus breaks
the mould,
Fair Spring slides hither o'er the
Southern sea,
Wavers on her thin stem the snowdrop
cold
That trembles not to kisses of the
bee.
Come, Spring, for now from all the
dripping eaves
The spear of ice has wept itself
away,
And hour by hour unfolding woodbine
leaves
O'er his uncertain shadow droops
the day.
She comes ! The loosen'd rivulets
run ;
The frost-bead melts upon her golden
hair ;
Her mantle, slowly greening in the
Sun,
Now wraps her close, now arching
leaves her bare
To breaths of balmier air ;

II

Up leaps the lark, gone wild to wel-
come her,
About her glance the tits, and shriek
the jays,
Before her skims the jubilant wood-
pecker,
The linnet's bosom blushes at her
gaze,
While round her brows a woodland
culver flits,
Watching her large light eyes and
gracious looks,
And in her open palm a halcyon
sits
Patient — the secret splendor of the
brooks.

Come, Spring! She comes on waste
and wood,
On farm and field; but enter also
here,
Diffuse thyself at will thro' all my
blood,
And, tho' thy violet sicken into sere,
Lodge with me all the year!

III

Once more a downy drift against the
brakes,
Self-darken'd in the sky, descending
slow!
But gladly see I thro' the wavering
flakes
Yon blanching apricot like snow in
snow.
These will thine eyes not brook in³⁰
forest-paths,
On their perpetual pine, nor round
the beech;

They fuse themselves to little spicy
baths,
Solved in the tender blushes of the
peach;
They lose themselves and die
On that new life that gems the
hawthorn line;
Thy gay lent-lilies wave and put them
by,
And out once more in varnish'd
glory shine
Thy stars of celandine.

IV

She floats across the hamlet. Heaven⁴⁰
lours,
But in the tearful splendor of her
smiles
I see the slowly-thickening chestnut
towers
Fill out the spaces by the barren
tiles.



'She comes on waste and wood,
On farm and field'

Now past her feet the swallow circling
flies,
A clamorous cuckoo stoops to meet
her hand;
Her light makes rainbows in my closing
eyes,
I hear a charm of song thro' all the
land.
Come, Spring! She comes, and Earth
is glad
To roll her North below thy deep-
ening dome,
But ere thy maiden birk be wholly
clad,⁵⁰
And these low bushes dip their
twigs in foam,
Make all true hearths thy home.

V

Across my garden! and the thicket
stirs,
The fountain pulses high in sunnier
jets,
The blackcap warbles, and the turtle
purrs,
The starling claps his tiny casta-
nets.
Still round her forehead wheels the
woodland dove,
And scatters on her throat the sparks
of dew,
The kingcup fills her footprint, and
above
Broaden the glowing isles of vernal
blue.⁶⁰
Hail, ample presence of a Queen,
Bountiful, beautiful, apparell'd gay,
Whose mantle, every shade of glanc-
ing green,
Flies back in fragrant breezes to
display
A tunic white as May!

VI

She whispers, 'From the South I bring
you balm,
For on a tropic mountain was I
born,
While some dark dweller by the coco-
palm
Watch'd my far meadow zoned with
airy morn;
From under rose a muffled moan of
floods;⁷⁰
I sat beneath a solitude of snow;

There no one came, the turf was
fresh, the woods
Plunged gulf on gulf thro' all their
vales below.
I saw beyond their silent tops
The steaming marshes of the scarlet
cranes,
The slant seas leaning on the man-
grove copse,
And summer basking in the sultry
plains
About a land of canes.

VII

'Then from my vapor-girdle soaring
forth
I scaled the buoyant highway of
the birds,⁸⁰
And drank the dews and drizzle of
the North,
That I might mix with men, and
hear their words
On pathway'd plains; for—while my
hand exults
Within the bloodless heart of lowly
flowers
To work old laws of Love to fresh
results,
Thro' manifold effect of simple
powers—
I too would teach the man
Beyond the darker hour to see the
bright,
That his fresh life may close as it be-
gan,⁸⁹
The still-fulfilling promise of a light
Narrowing the bounds of night.'

VIII

So wed thee with my soul, that I may
mark
The coming year's great good and
varied ills,
And new developments, whatever
spark
Be struck from out the clash of
warring wills;
Or whether, since our nature cannot
rest,
The smoke of war's volcano burst
again
From hoary deeps that belt the change-
ful West,
Old Empires, dwellings of the kings
of men;¹⁰⁰

Or should those fail that hold the
helm,
While the long day of knowledge
grows and warms,
And in the heart of this most ancient
realm
A hateful voice be utter'd, and
alarms
Sounding 'To arms! to arms!'

IX

A simpler, saner lesson might he learn
Who reads thy gradual process,
Holy Spring.
Thy leaves possess the season in their
turn,
And in their time thy warblers rise
on wing.
How surely glidest thou from March
to May,
And changest, breathing it, the sul-
len wind,
Thy scope of operation, day by day,
Larger and fuller, like the human
mind!
Thy warmth from bud to bud
Accomplish that blind model in the
seed,
And men have hopes, which race the
restless blood,
That after many changes may suc-
ceed
Life which is Life indeed.

MERLIN AND THE GLEAM

I

O young Mariner,
You from the haven
Under the sea-cliff,
You that are watching
The gray Magician
With eyes of wonder,
I am Merlin,
And I am dying,
I am Merlin
Who follow the Gleam.

II

Mighty the Wizard
Who found me at sunrise
Sleeping, and woke me
And learn'd me Magic!

Great the Master,
And sweet the Magic,
When over the valley,
In early summers,
Over the mountain,
On human faces,
And all around me,
Moving to melody,
Floated the Gleam.

III

Once at the croak of a Raven who
crost it,
A barbarous people,
Blind to the magic
And deaf to the melody,
Snarl'd at and cursed me.
A demon vext me,
The light retreated,
The landskip darken'd,
The melody deaden'd,
The Master whisper'd,
'Follow the Gleam.'

IV

Then to the melody,
Over a wilderness
Gliding, and glancing at
Elf of the woodland,
Gnome of the cavern,
Griffin and Giant,
And dancing of Fairies
In desolate hollows,
And wraiths of the mountain,
And rolling of dragons
By warble of water,
Or cataract music
Of falling torrents,
Flitted the Gleam.

V

Down from the mountain
And over the level,
And streaming and shining on
Silent river,
Silvery willow,
Pasture and plowland,
Innocent maidens,
Garrulous children,
Homestead and harvest,
Reaper and gleaner,
And rough-ruddy faces
Of lowly labor,
Slided the Gleam —

VI

Then, with a melody
 Stronger and statelier,
 Led me at length
 To the city and palace
 Of Arthur the King ;
 Touch'd at the golden
 Cross of the churches,
 Flash'd on the tournament,
 Flicker'd and bicker'd
 From helmet to helmet,
 And last on the forehead
 Of Arthur the blameless
 Rested the Gleam.

VII

Clouds and darkness
 Closed upon Camelot ;
 Arthur had vanish'd
 I knew not whither,
 The king who loved me,
 And cannot die ;
 For out of the darkness
 Silent and slowly
 The Gleam, that had waned to a win-
 try glimmer
 On icy fallow
 And faded forest,
 Drew to the valley
 Named of the shadow,
 And slowly brightening
 Out of the glimmer,
 And slowly moving again to a melody
 Yearningly tender,
 Fell on the shadow,
 No longer a shadow,
 But clothed with the Gleam.

VIII

And broader and brighter
 The Gleam flying onward,
 Wed to the melody,
 Sang thro' the world ;
 And slower and fainter,
 Old and weary,
 But eager to follow,
 I saw, whenever
 In passing it glanced upon
 Hamlet or city,
 That under the Crosses
 The dead man's garden,
 The mortal hillock,
 Would break into blossom .
 And so to the land's
 Last limit I came —

And can no longer,
 But die rejoicing,
 For thro' the Magic
 Of Him the Mighty,
 Who taught me in childhood,
 There on the border
 Of boundless Ocean,
 And all but in Heaven
 Hovers the Gleam.

IX

Not of the sunlight,
 Not of the moonlight,
 Not of the starlight !
 O young Mariner,
 Down to the haven,
 Call your companions,
 Launch your vessel
 And crowd your canvas,
 And, ere it vanishes
 Over the margin,
 After it, follow it,
 Follow the Gleam.

ROMNEY'S REMORSE

'BEAT, little heart — I give you this
 and this.'
 Who are you ? What ! the Lady
 Hamilton ?
 Good, I am never weary painting
 you.
 To sit once more ? Cassandra, Hebe,
 Joan,
 Or spinning at your wheel beside the
 vine —
 Bacchante, what you will ; and if I
 fail
 To conjure and concentrate into form
 And color all you are, the fault is
 less
 In me than Art. What artist ever
 yet
 Could make pure light live on the
 canvas ? Art !
 Why should I so disrelish that short
 word ?
 Where am I ? snow on all the hills !
 so hot,
 So fever'd ! never colt would more
 delight
 To roll himself in meadow grass
 than I
 To wallow in that winter of the hills.

Nurse, were you hired ? or came of
 your own will
 To wait on one so broken, so forlorn ?
 Have I not met you somewhere long
 ago ?
 I am all but sure I have—in Kendal
 church—
 O, yes ! I hired you for a season there,
 And then we parted ; but you look so
 kind ²¹
 That you will not deny my sultry
 throat
 One draught of icy water. There —
 you spill
 The drops upon my forehead. Your
 hand shakes.
 I am ashamed. I am a trouble to you,
 Could kneel for your forgiveness.
 Are they tears ?
 For me—they do me too much grace
 —for me ?
 O Mary, Mary !
 Vexing you with words !
 Words only, born of fever, or the
 fumes
 Of that dark opiate dose you gave me,
 — words, ³⁰
 Wild babble. I have stumbled back
 again
 Into the common day, the sounder self.
 God stay me there, if only for your
 sake,
 The truest, kindest, noblest-hearted
 wife
 That ever wore a Christian marriage-
 ring.
 My curse upon the Master's apo-
 thegm,
 That wife and children drag an artist
 down !
 This seem'd my lodestar in the heaven
 of Art,
 And lured me from the household fire
 on earth.
 To you my days have been a lifelong
 lie, ⁴⁰
 Grafted on half a truth ; and tho' you
 say,
 'Take comfort you have won the
 painter's fame,'
 The best in me that sees the worst in
 me,
 And groans to see it, finds no comfort
 there.
 What fame ? I am not Raphael,
 Titian, —no,

Nor even a Sir Joshua, some will cry.
 Wrong there ! The painter's fame ?
 but mine, that grew
 Blown into glittering by the popular
 breath,
 May float awhile beneath the sun,
 may roll
 The rainbow hues of heaven about it —
 There !
 The color'd bubble bursts above the
 abyss ⁵¹
 Of Darkness, utter Lethe.

Is it so ?
 Her sad eyes plead for my own fame
 with me
 To make it dearer.

Look, the sun has risen
 To flame along another dreary day.
 Your hand. How bright you keep
 your marriage-ring !
 Raise me. I thank you.

Has your opiate then
 Bred this black mood ? or am I con-
 scious, more
 Than other Masters, of the chasm be-
 tween
 Work and Ideal ? Or does the gloom
 of age ⁶⁰
 And suffering cloud the height I stand
 upon
 Even from myself ? stand ? stood —
 no more.

And yet
 The world would lose, if such a wife
 as you
 Should vanish unrecorded. Might I
 crave
 One favor ? I am bankrupt of all
 claim
 On your obedience, and my strongest
 wish
 Falls flat before your least unwilling-
 ness.
 Still, would you — if it please you —
 sit to me ?
 I dream'd last night of that clear
 summer noon,
 When seated on a rock, and foot to
 foot ⁷⁰
 With your own shadow in the placid
 lake,
 You clapt our infant daughter, heart
 to heart.

I had been among the hills, and
brought you down
A length of staghorn-moss, and this
you twined
About her cap. I see the picture
yet,
Mother and child. A sound from far
away,
No louder than a bee among the
flowers,
A fall of water lull'd the noon asleep
You still'd it for the moment with a
song
Which often echo'd in me, while I
stood
Before the great Madonna-master-
pieces
Of ancient Art in Paris, or in Rome.

Mary, my crayons! if I can, I
will.
You should have been — I might have
made you once,
Had I but known you as I know you
now —
The true Alcestis of the time. Your
song —
Sit, listen! I remember it, a proof
That I — even I — at times remember'd
you.

'Beat upon mine, little heart! beat, beat!
Beat upon mine! you are mine, my sweet!
All mine from your pretty blue eyes to your
feet,
My sweet.'

Less profile! turn to me — three-quar-
ter face.

'Sleep, little blossom, my honey, my bliss!
For I give you this, and I give you this! .
And I blind your pretty blue eyes with a
kiss!
Sleep!'

Too early blinded by the kiss of
death —

'Father and Mother will watch you grow' —
You watch'd, not I; she did not grow,
she died.

'Father and Mother will watch you grow,
And gather the roses whenever they blow,
And find the white heather wherever you
go,
My sweet.'

Ah, my white heather only blooms in
heaven
With Milton's amaranth. There, there,
there! a child
Had shamed me at it — Down, you idle
tools,
Stamp't into dust — tremulous, all
awry,
Blurr'd like a landskip in a ruffled
pool, —
Not one stroke firm. This Art, that
harlot-like
Seduced me from you, leaves me har-
lot-like,
Who love her still, and whimper, im-
potent
To win her back before I die — and
then —
Then, in the loud world's bastard judg-
ment-day,
One truth will damn me with the mind-
less mob,
Who feel no touch of my temptation,
more
Than all the myriad lies that blacken
round
The corpse of every man that gains a
name;
'This model husband, this fine artist!'
Fool,
What matters? Six foot deep of bu-
rial mould
Will dull their comments! Ay, but
when the shout
Of His descending peals from heaven,
and throbs
Thro' earth and all her graves, if He
should ask,
'Why left you wife and children? for
my sake,
According to my word?' and I re-
plied,
'Nay, Lord, for Art,' why, that would
sound so mean
That all the dead, who wait the doom
of hell
For bolder sins than mine, adulteries,
Wife-murders, — nay, the ruthless
Mussulman
Who flings his bowstrung harem in
the sea,
Would turn, and glare at me, and
point and jeer,
And gibber at the worm who, living,
made

The wife of wives a widow-bride, and
lost
Salvation for a sketch.

I am wild again !
The coals of fire you heap upon my
head
Have crazed me. Some one knocking
there without ?
No! Will my Indian brother come ? to
find
Me or my coffin ? Should I know the
man ?
This worn-out Reason dying in her
house
May leave the windows blinded, and
if so, ¹⁴⁰
Bid him farewell for me, and tell
him —

Hope!
I hear a death-bed angel whisper,
'Hope.'
'The miserable have no medicine —
But only hope!' He said it — in the
play.
His crime was of the senses; of the
mind
Mine — worse, cold, calculated.

Tell my son —
O, let me lean my head upon your
breast.
'Beat, little heart' on this fool brain
of mine.
I once had friends — and many — none
like you.
I love you more than when we mar-
ried. Hope! ¹⁵⁰
O, yes, I hope, or fancy that, perhaps,
Human forgiveness touches heaven,
and thence —

For you forgive me, you are sure of
that —
Reflected, sends a light on the for-
given.

PARNASSUS

Exegi monumentum . . .
Quod non . . .
Possit diruere . . .

. . . innumerabilis
Annorum series et fuga temporum.

HORACE.

I

WHAT be those crown'd forms high
over the sacred fountain?

Bards, that the mighty Muses have
raised to the heights of the
mountain,
And over the flight of the Ages!
O Goddesses, help me up thi-
ther!
Lightning may shrivel the laurel of
Cæsar, but mine would not
wither.
Steep is the mountain, but you, you
will help me to overcome it,
And stand with my head in the zenith,
and roll my voice from the sum-
mit,
Sounding forever and ever thro' Earth
and her listening nations,
And mixt with the great sphere-music
of stars and of constellations.

II

What be those two shapes high over
the sacred fountain,
Taller than all the Muses, and huger
than all the mountain ?
On those two known peaks they stand
ever spreading and heighten-
ing;
Poet, that evergreen laurel is blasted
by more than lightning!
Look, in their deep double shadow
the crown'd ones all disappear-
ing!
Sing like a bird and be happy, nor hope
for a deathless hearing!
'Sounding for ever and ever?' pass
on! the sight confuses —
These are Astronomy and Geology,
terrible Muses!

III

If the lips were touch'd with fire from
off a pure Pierian altar,
Tho' their music here be mortal need
the singer greatly care ?
Other songs for other worlds! the fire
within him would not falter ;
Let the golden Iliad vanish, Homer
here is Homer there.

BY AN EVOLUTIONIST

THE Lord let the house of a brute to
the soul of a man,
And the man said, 'Am I your
debtor ?'

And the Lord — 'Not yet; but make
it as clean as you can,
And then I will let you a better.'

I

If my body come from brutes, my soul
uncertain or a fable,
Why not bask amid the senses while
the sun of morning shines,
I, the finer brute rejoicing in my
hounds, and in my stable,
Youth and health, and birth and
wealth, and choice of women
and of wines?

II

What hast thou done for me, grim Old
Age, save breaking my bones on
the rack?
Would I had past in the morn-
ing that looks so bright from
afar!

OLD AGE

Done for thee? starved the wild beast
that was linkt with thee eighty
years back.
Less weight now for the ladder-of-
heaven that hangs on a star.

I

If my body come from brutes, tho'
somewhat finer than their own,
I am heir, and this my king-
dom. Shall the royal voice be
mute?
No, but if the rebel subject seek to
drag me from the throne,
Hold the sceptre, Human Soul, and
rule thy province of the brute.

II

I have climb'd to the snows of Age,
and I gaze at a field in the
Past,
Where I sank with the body at
times in the sloughs of a low
desire,
But I hear no yelp of the beast, and
the Man is quiet at last,
As he stands on the heights of his
life with a glimpse of a height
that is higher.

FAR—FAR—AWAY

(FOR MUSIC)

WHAT sight so lured him thro' the
fields he knew
As where earth's green stole into hea-
ven's own hue,
Far—far—away?

What sound was dearest in his native
dells?
The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening
bells
Far—far—away.

What vague world-whisper, mystic
pain or joy,
Thro' those three words would haunt
him when a boy,
Far—far—away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a
breath
From some fair dawn beyond the
doors of death
Far—far—away?

Far, far, how far? from o'er the gates
of birth,
The faint horizons, all the bounds of
earth,
Far—far—away?

What charm in words, a charm no
words could give?
O dying words, can Music make you
live
Far—far—away?

POLITICS

WE move, the wheel must always
move,
Nor always on the plain,
And if we move to such a goal
As Wisdom hopes to gain,
Then you that drive, and know your
craft,
Will firmly hold the rein,
Nor lend an ear to random cries,
Or you may drive in vain;
For some cry 'Quick' and some cry
'Slow.'

But, while the hills remain,
Up hill 'Too-slow' will need the whip,
Down hill 'Too-quick' the chain.

BEAUTIFUL CITY

BEAUTIFUL city, the centre and crater
of European confusion,
O you with your passionate shriek
for the rights of an equal hu-
manity,
How often your Re-volution has pro-
ven but E-volution
Roll'd again back on itself in the tides
of a civic insanity!

THE ROSES ON THE TERRACE

ROSE, on this terrace fifty years ago,
When I was in my June, you in
your May,
Two words, 'My Rose,' set all your
face aglow,
And now that I am white and you
are gray,
That blush of fifty years ago, my
dear,
Blooms in the past, but close to me
to-day,
As this red rose, which on our terrace
here
Glow in the blue of fifty miles
away.

THE PLAY

ACT first, this Earth, a stage so
gloom'd with woe
You all but sicken at the shifting
scenes.
And yet be patient. Our Playwright
may show
In some fifth act what this wild
Drama means.

ON ONE WHO AFFECTED AN EFFEMINATE MANNER

WHILE man and woman still are in-
complete,
I prize that soul where man and wo-
man meet,

Which types all Nature's male and
female plan,
But, friend, man-woman is not womar
man.

TO ONE WHO RAN DOWN THE ENGLISH

You make our faults too gross, and
thence maintain
Our darker future. May your fears
be vain!
At times the small black fly upon the
pane
May seem the black ox of the distant
plain.

THE SNOWDROP

MANY, many welcomes,
February fair-maid,
Ever as of old time,
Solitary firstling,
Coming in the cold time,
Prophet of the gay time,
Prophet of the May time,
Prophet of the roses,
Many, many welcomes,
February fair-maid!

THE THROSTLE

'SUMMER is coming, summer is com-
ing.
I know it, I know it, I know it.
Light again, leaf again, life again,
love again!'
Yes, my wild little Poet.
Sing the new year in under the blue.
Last year you sang it as gladly.
'New, new, new, new!' Is it then
so new
That you should carol so madly?
'Love again, song again, nest again,
young again,'
Never a prophet so crazy!
And hardly a daisy as yet, little friend,
See, there is hardly a daisy.
'Here again, here, here, here, happy
year!'

O warble unchidden, unbidden !
 Summer is coming, is coming, my
 dear,
 And all the winters are hidden.

THE OAK

LIVE thy Life,
 Young and old,
 Like yon oak,
 Bright in spring,
 Living gold ;

Summer-rich
 Then ; and then
 Autumn-changed,
 Soberer-hued
 Gold again.

All his leaves
 Fallen at length,

Look, he stands,
 Trunk and bough,
 Naked strength.

IN MEMORIAM

W. G. WARD

FAREWELL, whose like on earth I
 shall not find,
 Whose Faith and Work were bells
 of full accord,
 My friend, the most unworldly of
 mankind,
 Most generous of all Ultramontanes,
 Ward,
 How subtle at tierce and quart of
 mind with mind,
 How loyal in the following of thy
 Lord !



QUEEN MARY

QUEEN MARY

A DRAMA

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

QUEEN MARY.

PHILIP, *King of Naples and Sicily, afterwards King of Spain.*

THE PRINCESS ELIZABETH.

REGINALD POLE, *Cardinal and Papal Legate.*

SIMON RENARD, *Spanish Ambassador.*

LE SIEUR DE NOAILLES, *French Ambassador.*

THOMAS CRANMER, *Archbishop of Canterbury.*

SIR NICHOLAS HEATH, *Archbishop of York; Lord Chancellor after Gardiner.*

EDWARD COURTENAY, *Earl of Devon.*

LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, *afterwards Lord Howard, and Lord High Admiral.*

LORD WILLIAMS OF THAME.

LORD PAGET.

LORD PETRE.

STEPHEN GARDINER, *Bishop of Winchester and Lord Chancellor.*

EDMUND BONNER, *Bishop of London.*

THOMAS THIRLBY, *Bishop of Ely.*

SIR THOMAS WYATT

SIR THOMAS STAFFORD } *Insurrectionary Leaders.*

SIR RALPH BAGENHALL.
 SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL.
 SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD.
 SIR WILLIAM CECIL.
 SIR THOMAS WHITE, *Lord Mayor of London.*
 THE DUKE OF ALVA } *attending on Philip.*
 THE COUNT DE FERIA }
 PETER MARTYR.
 FATHER COLE.
 FATHER BOURNE.
 VILLA GARCIA.
 SOTO.
 CAPTAIN BRETT } *Adherents of Wyatt.*
 ANTHONY KNYVETT }
 PETERS, *Gentleman of Lord Howard.*
 ROGER, *Servant to Noailles.*
 WILLIAM, *Servant to Wyatt.*
 STEWARD OF HOUSEHOLD *to the Princess Elizabeth.*
 OLD NOKES and NOKES.
 MARCHIONESS OF EXETER, *Mother of Courtenay.*
 LADY CLARENCE } *Ladies in Waiting to the Queen.*
 LADY MAGDALEN DACRES }
 ALICE }
 MAID OF HONOR *to the Princess Elizabeth.*
 JOAN } *two Country Wives.*
 TIB }

Lords and other Attendants, Members of the Privy Council, Members of Parliament, Two Gentlemen, Aldermen, Citizens, Peasants, Ushers, Messengers, Guards, Pages, Gossellers, Marshalmen, etc.

QUEEN MARY

ACT I

SCENE I. — ALDGATE RICHLY DECORATED

CROWD. MARSHALMEN

Marshalmen. Stand back, keep a clear lane! When will her Majesty pass, say'st thou? why now, even now; wherefore draw back your heads and your horns before I break them, and make what noise you will with your tongues, so it be not treason. Long live Queen Mary, the lawful and legitimate daughter of Harry the Eighth! Shout, knaves! 10

Citizens. Long live Queen Mary!

First Citizen. That's a hard word, legitimate; what does it mean?

Second Citizen. It means a bastard.

Third Citizen. Nay, it means true-born.

First Citizen. Why, did n't the Parliament make her a bastard?

Second Citizen. No; it was the Lady Elizabeth. 20

Third Citizen. That was after, man; that was after.

First Citizen. Then which is the bastard?

Second Citizen. Troth, they be both bastards by Act of Parliament and Council.

Third Citizen. Ay, the Parliament can make every true-born man of us a bastard. Old Nokes, can't it make thee a bastard? thou shouldst know, for thou art as white as three Christmases.

Old Nokes (dreamily). Who's a-passing? King Edward or King Richard? 33

Third Citizen. No, old Nokes.

Old Nokes. It's Harry!

Third Citizen. It's Queen Mary.

Old Nokes. The blessed Mary's a-passing! [Falls on his knees.

Nokes. Let father alone, my masters! he's past your questioning. 43

Third Citizen. Answer thou for him, then! thou'rt no such cockerel thyself, for thou was born i' the tail end of old Harry the Seventh.

Nokes. Eh! that was afore bas-

tard-making began. I was born true man at five in the forenoon, i' the tail of old Harry, and so they can't make me a bastard. ⁵²

Third Citizen. But if Parliament can make the Queen a bastard, why, it follows all the more that they can make thee one, who art fray'd i' the knees, and out at elbow, and bald o' the back, and bursten at the toes, and down at heels.

Nokes. I was born of a true man and a ring'd wife, and I can't argue upon it; but I and my old woman 'ud burn upon it, that would we.

Marshalman. What are you cackling of bastardy under the Queen's own nose? I'll have you flogg'd and burnt too, by the rood I will.

First Citizen. He swears by the rood. Whew! ⁶⁹

Second Citizen. Hark! the trumpets.

[*The Procession passes, Mary and Elizabeth riding side by side, and disappears under the gate.*]

Citizens. Long live Queen Mary! down with all traitors! God save her Grace; and death to Northumberland! [*Exeunt.*]

Manent TWO GENTLEMEN.

First Gentleman. By God's light a noble creature, right royal!

Second Gentleman. She looks comelier than ordinary to-day; but to my mind the Lady Elizabeth is the more noble and royal. ⁸¹

First Gentleman. I mean the Lady Elizabeth. Did you hear (I have a daughter in her service who reported it) that she met the Queen at Wanstead with five hundred horse, and the Queen (tho' some say they be much divided) took her hand, call'd her sweet sister, and kiss'd not her alone, but all the ladies of her following. ⁹¹

Second Gentleman. Ay, that was in her hour of joy. There will be plenty to sunder and unsister them again; this Gardiner for one, who is to be made Lord Chancellor, and will pounce like a wild beast out of his cage to worry Cranmer. ⁹⁸

First Gentleman. And, furthermore, my daughter said that when there

rose a talk of the late rebellion, she spoke even of Northumberland pitifully, and of the good Lady Jane as a poor innocent child who had but obeyed her father; and, furthermore, she said that no one in her time should be burnt for heresy.

Second Gentleman. Well, sir, I look for happy times. ¹⁰⁹

First Gentleman. There is but one thing against them. I know not if you know.

Second Gentleman. I suppose you touch upon the rumor that Charles, the master of the world, has offer'd her his son Philip, the Pope and the devil. I trust it is but a rumor. ¹¹⁷

First Gentleman. She is going now to the Tower to loose the prisoners there, and among them Courtenay, to be made Earl of Devon, of royal blood, of splendid feature, whom the council and all her people wish her to marry. May it be so, for we are many of us Catholics, but few Papists, and the Hot Gospellers will go mad upon it.

Second Gentleman. Was she not betroth'd in her babyhood to the Great Emperor himself? ¹²⁹

First Gentleman. Ay, but he's too old.

Second Gentleman. And again to her cousin Reginald Pole, now Cardinal; but I hear that he too is full of aches and broken before his day.

First Gentleman. Oh, the Pope could dispense with his cardinalate, and his achage, and his breakage, if that were all. Will you not follow the procession? ¹⁴⁰

Second Gentleman. No; I have seen enough for this day.

First Gentleman. Well, I shall follow; if I can get near enough I shall judge with my own eyes whether her Grace incline to this splendid scion of Plantagenet. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II

A ROOM IN LAMBETH PALACE

Cranmer. To Strasburg, Antwerp, Frankfort, Zurich, Worms, Geneva, Basle — our bishops from their sees

Or fled, they say, or flying—Poinet,
Barlow,
Bale, Scory, Coverdale; besides the
deans
Of Christchurch, Durham, Exeter,
and Wells—
Ailmer and Bullingham, and hundreds
more;
So they report. I shall be left alone.
No; Hooper, Ridley, Latimer, will
not fly.

Enter PETER MARTYR.

Peter Martyr. Fly, Cranmer! were
there nothing else, your name
Stands first of those who sign'd the
letters patent ¹⁰
That gave her royal crown to Lady
Jane.

Cranmer. Stand first it may, but it
was written last.
Those that are now her privy council
sign'd
Before me; nay, the judges had pro-
nounced
That our young Edward might be-
queath the crown
Of England, putting by his father's
will.
Yet I stood out, till Edward sent for
me.

The wan boy-king, with his fast-fad-
ing eyes
Fixt hard on mine, his frail transpar-
ent hand,
Damp with the sweat of death, and
gripping mine, ²⁰
Whisper'd me, if I loved him, not to
yield

His Church of England to the Papal
wolf
And Mary; then I could no more—I
sign'd.

Nay, for bare shame of inconsistency,
She cannot pass her traitor council
by,

To make me headless.

Peter Martyr. That might be for-
given.

I tell you, fly, my lord. You do not
own

The bodily presence in the Eucharist,
Their wafer and perpetual sacrifice:
Your creed will be your death.

Cranmer. Step after step,
Thro' many voices crying right and
left, ³¹

Have I climb'd back into the primal
church,
And stand within the porch, and Christ
with me.

My flight were such a scandal to the
faith,

The downfall of so many simple souls,
I dare not leave my post.

Peter Martyr. But you divorced
Queen Catharine and her father; hence,
her hate

Will burn till you are burn'd.

Cranmer. I cannot help it.
The Canonists and Schoolmen were
with me.

'Thou shalt not wed thy brother's
wife.'—'T is written, ⁴⁰
'They shall be childless.' True, Mary
was born,

But France would not accept her for
a bride

As being born from incest; and this
wrought

Upon the King; and child by child,
you know,

Were momentary sparkles, out as quick
Almost as kindled; and he brought
his doubts

And fears to me. Peter, I'll swear
for him

He *did* believe the bond incestuous.
But wherefore am I trenching on the
time

That should already have seen your
steps a mile ⁵⁰

From me and Lambeth? God be with
you! Go.

Peter Martyr. Ah, but how fierce a
letter you wrote against

Their superstition when they slander'd
you

For setting up a mass at Canterbury
To please the Queen!

Cranmer. It was a wheedling monk
Set up the mass.

Peter Martyr. I know it, my good
lord.

But you so bubbled over with hot
terms

Of Satan, liars, blasphemy, Antichrist,
She never will forgive you. Fly, my
lord, fly!

Cranmer. I wrote it, and God grant
me power to burn! ⁶⁰

Peter Martyr. They have given me
a safe conduct; for all that

I dare not stay. I fear, I fear, I see you,

Dear friend, for the last time; farewell, and fly.

Cranmer. Fly and farewell, and let me die the death.

[*Exit* Peter Martyr.]

Enter OLD SERVANT.

O, kind and gentle master, the Queen's Officers

Are here in force to take you to the Tower.

Cranmer. Ay, gentle friend, admit them. I will go.

I thank my God it is too late to fly.
[*Reunt.*]

SCENE III

ST. PAUL'S CROSS

FATHER BOURNE *in the pulpit.* A crowd. MARCHIONESS OF EXETER, COURTENAY. The SIEUR DE NOAILLES and his man ROGER *in front of the stage.* *Hubbub.*

Noailles. Hast thou let fall those papers in the palace?

Roger. Ay, sir.

Noailles. 'There will be no peace for Mary till Elizabeth lose her head.'

Roger. Ay, sir.

Noailles. And the other, 'Long live Elizabeth the Queen!'

Roger. Ay, sir; she needs must tread upon them.

Noailles. Well.

These beastly swine make such a grunting here,

I cannot catch what Father Bourne is saying.

Roger. Quiet a moment, my masters; hear what the shaveling has to say for himself.

Crowd. Hush—hear!

Bourne. —and so this unhappy land, long divided in itself, and sever'd from the faith, will return into the one true fold, seeing that our gracious Virgin Queen hath —

Crowd. No pope! no pope!

Roger (to those about him, mimicking Bourne). —hath sent for the holy legate of the holy father the Pope, Car-

dinal Pole, to give us all that holy absolution which —

First Citizen. Old Bourne to the life!

Second Citizen. Holy absolution! holy Inquisition!

Third Citizen. Down with the Papist!

Bourne. —and now that your good bishop, Bonner, who hath lain so long under bonds for the faith —

Noailles. Friend Roger, steal thou in among the crowd,

And get the swine to shout 'Elizabeth.'

Yon gray old Gospeller, sour as mid-winter,

Begin with him.

Roger (goes). By the mass, old friend, we'll have no pope here while the Lady Elizabeth lives.

Gospeller. Art thou of the true faith, fellow, that swearest by the mass?

Roger. Ay, that am I, new converted, but the old leaven sticks to my tongue yet.

First Citizen. He says right; by the mass, we'll have no mass here.

Voices of the Crowd. Peace! hear him; let his own words damn the Papist. From thine own mouth I judge thee — tear him down!

Bourne. —and since our gracious Queen, let me call her our second Virgin Mary, hath begun to re-edify the true temple —

First Citizen. Virgin Mary! we'll have no virgins here — we'll have the Lady Elizabeth!

[*Swords are drawn, a knife is hurled and sticks in the pulpit. The mob throng to the pulpit stairs.*]

Marchioness of Exeter. Son Courtenay, wilt thou see the holy father

Murdered before thy face? up, son, and save him!

They love thee, and thou canst not come to harm.

Courtenay (in the pulpit). Shame, shame, my masters! are you English-born, And set yourselves by hundreds against one?

Crowd. A Courtenay ! a Courtenay !

[*A train of Spanish servants crosses at the back of the stage.*]

Noailles. These birds of passage come before their time.

Stave off the crowd upon the Spaniard there.

Roger. My masters, yonder's fatter game for you
Than this old gaping gargoyle ; look you there —

The Prince of Spain coming to wed our Queen !

After him, boys ! and pelt him from the city.

[*They seize stones and follow the Spaniards. Exeunt on the other side Marchioness of Exeter and Attendants.*]

Noailles (to Roger). Stand from me.

If Elizabeth lose her head —

That makes for France.

And if her people, anger'd there-upon,

Arise against her and dethrone the Queen —

That makes for France.

And if I breed confusion any way —

That makes for France.

Good-day, my Lord of Devon ;
A bold heart yours to beard that raging mob !

Courtenay. My mother said, Go up ; and up I went.

I knew they would not do me any wrong,

For I am mighty popular with them,
Noailles.

Noailles. You look'd a king.

Courtenay. Why not ? I am king's blood.

Noailles. And in the whirl of change may come to be one.

Courtenay. Ah !

Noailles. But does your gracious Queen entreat you kinglike ?

Courtenay. 'Fore God, I think she entreats me like a child.

Noailles. You've but a dull life in this maiden court,
I fear, my lord ?

Courtenay. A life of nods and yawns.

Noailles. So you would honor my poor house to-night,

We might enliven you. Divers honest fellows,

The Duke of Suffolk lately freed from prison,

Sir Peter Carew and Sir Thomas Wyatt,

Sir Thomas Stafford, and some more — we play.

Courtenay. At what ?

Noailles. The game of chess.

Courtenay. The game of chess !
I can play well, and I shall beat you there.

Noailles. Ay, but we play with Henry, King of France,

And certain of his court.

His Highness makes his moves across the Channel,

We answer him with ours, and there are messengers

That go between us.

Courtenay. Why, such a game, sir, were whole years a-playing.

Noailles. Nay ; not so long I trust.
That all depends

Upon the skill and swiftness of the players.

Courtenay. The King is skilful at it ?

Noailles. Very, my Lord.

Courtenay. And the stakes high ?

Noailles. But not beyond your means.

Courtenay. Well, I'm the first of players. I shall win.

Noailles. With our advice and in our company,

And so you well attend to the King's moves,

I think you may.

Courtenay. When do you meet ?

Noailles. To-night.

Courtenay (aside). I will be there ;
the fellow's at his tricks —

Deep — I shall fathom him. (*Aloud.*)
Good morning, *Noailles.*

[*Exit Courtenay.*]

Noailles. Good-day, my Lord.
Strange game of chess ! a king

That with her own pawns plays against a queen,

Whose play is all to find herself a king.
Ay ; but this fine blue-blooded Courtenay seems

Too princely for a pawn. Call him a knight,

That, with an ass's, not a horse's head,
Skips every way, from levity or from
fear.

Well, we shall use him somehow, so
that Gardiner 120

And Simon Renard spy not out our
game

Too early. Roger, thinkest thou that
any one

Suspected thee to be my man ?

Roger. Not one, sir.

Noailles. No! the disguise was
perfect. Let's away. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV

LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

ELIZABETH. *Enter* COURTENAY.

Courtenay. So yet am I,
Unless my friends and mirrors lie to
me,

A goodlier-looking fellow than this
Philip.

Pah!

The Queen is ill advised. Shall I turn
traitor ?

They've almost talked me into it; yet
the word

Affrights me somewhat; to be such a
one

As Harry Bolingbroke hath a lure in
it.

Good now, my Lady Queen, tho' by
your age

And by your looks you are not worth
the having, 10

Yet by your crown you are.

[*Seeing* Elizabeth.

The Princess there ?

If I tried her, and la — she's amorous.
Have we not heard of her in Edward's
time,

Her freaks and frolics with the late
Lord Admiral ?

I do believe she'd yield. I should be
still

A party in the State; and then, who
knows —

Elizabeth. What are you musing
on, my Lord of Devon ?

Courtenay. Has not the Queen —

Elizabeth. Done what, Sir ?

Courtenay. — made you follow

The Lady Suffolk and the Lady Len
nox ? — you,

The heir presumptive.

Elizabeth. Why do you ask ? you
know it. 20

Courtenay. You needs must bear
it hardly.

Elizabeth. No, indeed !

I am utterly submissive to the Queen.

Courtenay. Well, I was musing
upon that; the Queen

Is both my foe and yours; we should
be friends,

Elizabeth. My Lord, the hatred of
another to us

Is no true bond of friendship.

Courtenay. Might it not
Be the rough preface of some closer
bond ?

Elizabeth. My lord, you late were
loosed from out the Tower,

Where, like a butterfly in a chrysalis,
You spent your life; that broken, out

you flutter 30

Thro' the new world, go zigzag, now
would settle

Upon this flower, now that. But all
things here

At court are known; you have so-
lited

The Queen, and been rejected.

Courtenay. Flower, she !
Half faded ! but you, cousin, are fresh

and sweet
As the first flower no bee has ever
tried.

Elizabeth. Are you the bee to try
me ? why, but now

I called you butterfly.

Courtenay. You did me wrong,
I love not to be called a butterfly.

Why do you call me butterfly ? 40

Elizabeth. Why do you go so gay
then ?

Courtenay. Velvet and gold.
This dress was made me as the Earl
of Devon

To take my seat in; looks it not right
royal ?

Elizabeth. So royal that the Queen
forbade you wearing it.

Courtenay. I wear it then to spite
her.

Elizabeth. My lord, my lord;
I see you in the Tower again. Her

Majesty

Hears you affect the Prince — prelates kneel to you. —

Courtenay. I am the noblest blood in Europe, Madam, A Courtenay of Devon, and her cousin.

Elizabeth. She hears you make your boast that after all⁵⁰ She means to wed you. Folly, my good lord.

Courtenay. How folly? a great party in the State Wills me to wed her.

Elizabeth. Failing her, my lord, Doth not as great a party in the State Will you to wed me?

Courtenay. Even so, fair lady.

Elizabeth. You know to flatter ladies.

Courtenay. Nay, I meant True matters of the heart.

Elizabeth. My heart, my lord, Is no great party in the State as yet.

Courtenay. Great, said you? nay, you shall be great. I love you, Lay my life in your hands. Can you be close?⁶⁰

Elizabeth. Can you, my lord?

Courtenay. Close as a miser's casket. Listen:

The King of France, Noailles the Ambassador,

The Duke of Suffolk and Sir Peter Carew,

Sir Thomas Wyatt, I myself, some others,

Have sworn this Spanish marriage shall not be.

If Mary will not hear us — well — conjecture —

Were I in Devon with my wedded bride,

The people there so worship me — your ear;

You shall be Queen.

Elizabeth. You speak too low, my lord;⁷⁰

I cannot hear you.

Courtenay. I'll repeat it.

Elizabeth. No! Stand further off, or you may lose your head.

Courtenay. I have a head to lose for your sweet sake.

Elizabeth. Have you, my lord? Best keep it for your own.

Nay, pout not, cousin.

Not many friends are mine, except indeed

Among the many. I believe you mine, And so you may continue mine, farewell,

And that at once.

Enter MARY, behind.

Mary. Whispering — leagued together

To bar me from my Philip.

Courtenay. Pray — consider —

Elizabeth (seeing the Queen). Well, that's a noble horse of yours, my lord.⁸¹

I trust that he will carry you well to day,

And heal your headache.

Courtenay. You are wild; what headache?

Heartache, perchance; not headache.

Elizabeth (aside to Courtenay). Are you blind?

[*Courtenay sees the Queen and exit.*

Exit Mary.

Enter LORD WILLIAM HOWARD.

Howard. Was that my Lord of Devon? do not you

Be seen in corners with my Lord of Devon.

He hath fallen out of favor with the Queen.

She fears the lords may side with you and him

Against her marriage; therefore is he dangerous.

And if this Prince of fluff and feather come⁹⁰

To woo you, niece, he is dangerous every way.

Elizabeth. Not very dangerous that way, my good uncle.

Howard. But your own state is full of danger here.

The disaffected, heretics, reformers, Look to you as the one to crown their ends.

Mix not yourself with any plot I pray you;

Nay, if by chance you hear of any such,

Speak not thereof — no, not to your best friend,

Lest you should be confounded with it. Still —

Perinde ac cadaver — as the priest says,¹⁰⁰

You know your Latin—quiet as a dead body.

What was my Lord of Devon telling you?

Elizabeth. Whether he told me anything or not,
I follow your good counsel, gracious uncle.

Quiet as a dead body.

Howard. You do right well.
I do not care to know; but this I charge you,
Tell Courtenay nothing. The Lord Chancellor—

I count it as a kind of virtue in him,

He hath not many—as a mastiff dog
May love a puppy cur for no more reason

Than that the twain have been tied up together,

Thus Gardiner—for the two were fellow-prisoners

So many years in yon accursed Tower—

Hath taken to this Courtenay. Look to it, niece,

He hath no fence when Gardiner questions him;

All oozes out; yet him—because they know him

The last White Rose, the last Plantagenet—

Nay, there is Cardinal Pole, too—the people

Claim as their natural leader—ay, some say

That you shall marry him, make him king belike.

Elizabeth. Do they say so, good uncle?

Howard. Ay, good niece!

You should be plain and open with me, niece.

You should not play upon me.

Elizabeth. No, good uncle.

Enter GARDINER.

Gardiner. The Queen would see your Grace upon the moment.

Elizabeth. Why, my lord bishop?

Gardiner. I think she means to counsel your withdrawing
To Ashridge, or some other country house.

Elizabeth. Why, my lord bishop?

Gardiner. I do but bring the message, know no more.

Your Grace will hear her reasons from herself.

Elizabeth. 'Tis mine own wish fulfill'd before the word

Was spoken, for in truth I had meant to crave

Permission of her Highness to retire
To Ashridge, and pursue my studies there.

Gardiner. Madam, to have the wish before the word

Is man's good fairy—and the Queen is yours.

I left her with rich jewels in her hand,
Whereof 'tis like enough she means to make

A farewell present to your Grace.

Elizabeth. My lord,
I have the jewel of a loyal heart.

Gardiner. I doubt it not, madam,
most loyal. [*Bows low and exit.*]

Howard. See,

This comes of parleying with my Lord of Devon.

Well, well, you must obey; and I myself

Believe it will be better for your welfare.

Your time will come.

Elizabeth. I think my time will come.

Uncle,
I am of sovereign nature, that I know,

Not to be quell'd; and I have felt within me

Stirrings of some great doom when God's just hour

Peals—but this fierce old Gardiner—his big baldness,

That irritable forelock which he rubs,
His buzzard beak and deep-incavern'd eyes

Half fright me.

Howard. You've a bold heart; keep it so.

He cannot touch you save that you turn traitor;

And so take heed I pray you—you are one

Who love that men should smile upon you, niece.

They'd smile you into treason—some of them.

Elizabeth. I spy the rock beneath the smiling sea.
But if this Philip, the proud Catholic prince,
And this bald priest, and she that hates me, seek ¹⁶⁰
In that lone house to practise on my life,
By poison, fire, shot, stab —

Howard. They will not, niece.
Mine is the fleet and all the power at sea —

Or will be in a moment. If they dared
To harm you, I would blow this Philip and all
Your trouble to the dog-star and the devil.

Elizabeth. To the Pleiads, uncle ;
they have lost a sister.

Howard. But why say that ? what
have you done to lose her ?
Come, come, I will go with you to the Queen. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V

A ROOM IN THE PALACE

MARY with PHILIP'S miniature.
ALICE.

Mary (*kissing the miniature*). Most goodly, kinglike, and an emperor's son, —
A king to be, — is he not noble, girl ?
Alice. Goodly enough, your Grace,
and yet, methinks,
I have seen goodlier.

Mary. Ay ; some waxen doll
Thy baby eyes have rested on, belike ;
All red and white, the fashion of our land.

But my good mother came — God rest
her soul ! —
Of Spain, and I am Spanish in myself,
And in my likings.

Alice. By your Grace's leave,
Your royal mother came of Spain, but
took ¹⁰
To the English red and white. Your
royal father —
For so they say — was all pure lily and
rose

In his youth, and like a lady.

Mary. O just God !

Sweet mother, you had time and cause
enough

To sicken of his lilies and his roses.
Cast off, betray'd, defamed, divorced,
forlorn !

And then the King — that traitor past
forgiveness,

The false archbishop fawning on him,
married

The mother of Elizabeth — a heretic
Even as *she* is ; but God hath sent me
here ²⁰

To take such order with all heretics
That it shall be, before I die, as tho'
My father and my brother had not
lived.

What wast thou saying of this Lady
Jane,

Now in the Tower ?

Alice. Why madam, she was passing
Some chapel down in Essex, and with
her

Lady Anne Wharton, and the Lady
Anne

Bow'd to the pyx ; but Lady Jane
stood up

Stiff as the very backbone of heresy.
And wherefore bow ye not, says Lady
Anne, ³⁰

To him within there who made heaven
and earth ?

I cannot, and I dare not, tell your
Grace

What Lady Jane replied.

Mary. But I will have it.

Alice. She said — pray pardon me,
and pity her —

She hath hearken'd evil counsel — ah !
she said

The baker made him.

Mary. Monstrous ! blasphemous !
She ought to burn. Hence, thou

[*Exit Alice.*

No — being traitor
Her head will fall. Shall it ? she is
but a child.

We do not kill the child for doing that
His father whipt him into doing — a
head ⁴⁰

So full of grace and beauty ! would
that mine

Were half as gracious ! O, my lord to
be,

My love, for thy sake only !
I am eleven years older than he is.
But will he care for that ?

No, by the holy Virgin, being noble,
But love me only. Then the bastard
sprout,

My sister, is far fairer than myself.

Will he be drawn to her?

No, being of the true faith with my-
self. ⁵⁰

Paget is for him — for to wed with
Spain

Would treble England — Gardiner is
against him;

The Council, people, Parliament
against him;

But I will have him! My hard father
hated me;

My brother rather hated me than loved;
My sister cowers and hates me. Holy

Virgin,
Plead with thy blessed Son; grant me
my prayer.

Give me my Philip; and we two will
lead

The living waters of the Faith again
Back thro' their widow'd channel here,

and watch ⁶⁰

The parch'd banks rolling incense, as
of old,

To heaven, and kindled with the palms
of Christ!

Enter USHER.

Who waits, sir?

Usher. Madam, the Lord Chancel-
lor.

Mary. Bid him come in. (*Enter*
GARDINER.) Good morning, my
good lord. [*Exit Usher.*]

Gardiner. That every morning of
your Majesty

May be most good, is every morning's
prayer

Of your most loyal subject, Stephen
Gardiner.

Mary. Come you to tell me this, my
lord?

Gardiner. And more.

Your people have begun to learn your
worth.

Your pious wish to pay King Edward's
debts, ⁷⁰

Your lavish household curb'd, and the
remission

Of half that subsidy levied on the peo-
ple,

Make all tongues praise and all hearts
beat for you.

I'd have you yet more loved. The
realm is poor,

The exchequer at neap-tide; we might
withdraw

Part of our garrison at Calais.

Mary. Calais!
Our one point on the main, the gate of

France!

I am Queen of England; take mine
eyes, mine heart,

But do not lose me Calais.

Gardiner. Do not fear it.
Of that hereafter. I say your Grace is

loved. ⁸⁰

That I may keep you thus, who am
your friend

And ever faithful counsellor, might I
speak?

Mary. I can forespeak your speak-
ing. Would I marry

Prince Philip, if all England hate him?
That is

Your question, and I front it with
another:

Is it England, or a party? Now, your
answer.

Gardiner. My answer is, I wear be-
neath my dress

A shirt of mail; my house hath been
assaulted,

And when I walk abroad the populace,
With fingers pointed like so many dag-
gers, ⁹⁰

Stab me in fancy, hissing Spain and
Philip;

And when I sleep a hundred men-at-
arms

Guard my poor dreams for England.
Men would murder me,

Because they think me favorer of this
marriage.

Mary. And that were hard upon you,
my Lord Chancellor.

Gardiner. But our young Earl of
Devon —

Mary. Earl of Devon?
I freed him from the Tower, placed
him at Court;

I made him Earl of Devon, and — the
fool —

He wrecks his health and wealth on
courtesans,

And rolls himself in carrion like a dog.

Gardiner. More like a school-boy
that hath broken bounds ¹⁰⁰
Sickening himself with sweets.

Mary. I will not hear of him.
Good, then, they will revolt; but I am
Tudor,
And shall control them.

Gardiner. I will help you, madam,
Even to the utmost. All the church is
grateful.

You have ousted the mock priest, re-
pulpited

The shepherd of Saint Peter, raised
the rood again,

And brought us back the mass. I am
all thanks

To God and to your Grace; yet I know
well,

Your people, and I go with them so
far, 110

Will brook nor Pope nor Spaniard
here to play

The tyrant, or in commonwealth or
church.

Mary (showing the picture). Is this
the face of one who plays the
tyrant?

Peruse it; is it not goodly, ay, and
gentle?

Gardiner. Madam, methinks a cold
face and a haughty.

And when your Highness talks of
Courtenay —

Ay, true — a goodly one. I would
his life

Were half as goodly (*aside*).

Mary. What is that you mutter?

Gardiner. O, madam, take it
bluntly; marry Philip,

And be stepmother of a score of sons!
The prince is known in Spain, in

Flanders, ha! 121
For Philip —

Mary. You offend us; you may
leave us.

You see thro' warping glasses.

Gardiner. If your Majesty —

Mary. I have sworn upon the body
and blood of Christ

I'll none but Philip.

Gardiner. Hath your Grace so
sworn?

Mary. Ay, Simon Renard knows
it.

Gardiner. News to me!

It then remains for your poor Gardi-
ner,

So you still care to trust him some-
what less

Than Simon Renard, to compose the
event

In some such form as least may harm
your Grace. 130

Mary. I'll have the scandal sounded
to the mud.

I know it a scandal.

Gardiner. All my hope is now
It may be found a scandal.

Mary. You offend us.

Gardiner (aside). These princes are
like children, must be phy-
sick'd,

The bitter in the sweet. I have lost
mine office,

It may be, thro' mine honesty, like a
fool. [Exit.]

Enter USHER.

Mary. Who waits?

Usher. The ambassador from
France, your Grace.

Mary (sits down). Bid him come in.
Good morning, Sir de Noailles.

[Exit Usher.]

Noailles (entering). A happy morn-
ing to your Majesty.

Mary. And I should some time
have a happy morning; 140

I have had none yet. What says the
King your master?

Noailles. Madam, my master hears
with much alarm

That you may marry Philip, Prince
of Spain —

Foreseeing, with whate'er unwilling-
ness,

That if this Philip be the titular King
Of England, and at war with him,

your Grace
And kingdom will be suck'd into the

war,

Ay, tho' you long for peace; where-
fore, my master,

If but to prove your Majesty's good-
will,

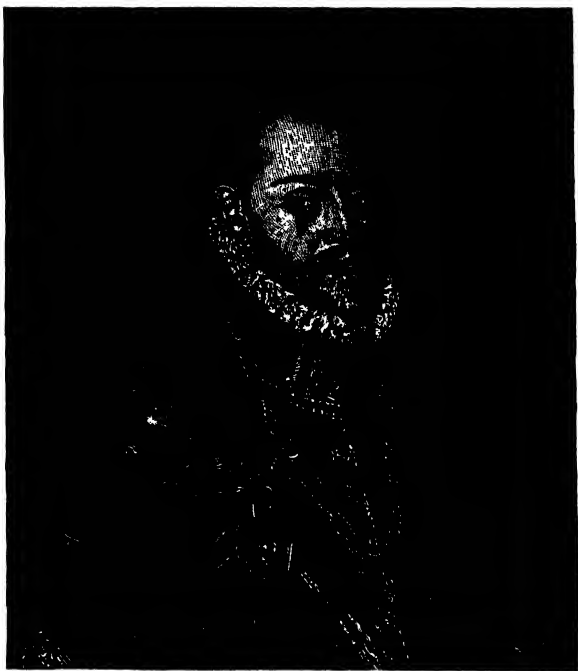
Would fain have some fresh treaty
drawn between you. 150

Mary. Why some fresh treaty?
wherefore should I do it?

Sir, if we marry, we shall still main-
tain

All former treaties with his Majesty.
Our royal word for that! and your

good master,
Pray God he do not be the first to
break them,



PHILIP

Must be content with that ; and so,
farewell.

Noailles (going, returns). I would
your answer had been other,
madam,
For I foresee dark days.

Mary. And so do I, sir ;
Your master works against me in the
dark.

I do believe he help Northumberland
Against me.

Noailles. Nay, pure phantasy,
your Grace.

Why should he move against you ?

Mary. Will you hear why ?
Mary of Scotland, — for I have not
own'd

My sister, and I will not, — after
me

Is heir of England ; and my royal
father,

To make the crown of Scotland one
with ours,

Had mark'd her for my brother Ed-
ward's bride ;

Ay, but your king stole her a babe
from Scotland

In order to betroth her to your Dau-
phin.

See then : 170
Mary of Scotland, married to your
Dauphin,

Would make our England, France ;
Mary of England, joining hands with
Spain,

Would be too strong for France.

Yea, were there issue born to her,
Spain and we,

One crown, might rule the world.
There lies your fear.

That is your drift. You play at hide
and seek.

Show me your faces !

Noailles. Madam, I am amazed.
French, I must needs wish all good
things for France.

That must be pardon'd me ; but I protest¹⁸⁰
Your Grace's policy hath a farther flight
Than mine into the future. We but seek
Some settled ground for peace to stand upon.

Mary. Well, we will leave all this, sir, to our council.

Have you seen Philip ever ?

Noailles. Only once.

Mary. Is this like Philip ?

Noailles. Ay, but nobler-looking.

Mary. Hath he the large ability of the Emperor ?

Noailles. No, surely.

Mary. I can make allowance for thee,

Thou speakest of the enemy of thy king.

Noailles. Make no allowance for the naked truth.¹⁹⁰

He is every way a lesser man than Charles ;

Stone-hard, ice-cold — no dash of daring in him.

Mary. If cold, his life is pure.

Noailles. Why (*smiling*), no, indeed.

Mary. Say'st thou ?

Noailles. A very wanton life indeed (*smiling*).

Mary. Your audience is concluded, sir. (*Exit Noailles.*) You cannot learn a man's nature from his natural foe.

Enter USHER.

Who waits ?

Usher. The ambassador of Spain, your Grace. [*Exit.*]

Enter SIMON RENARD.

Mary (*rising to meet him*). Thou art ever welcome, Simon Renard. Hast thou brought me the letter which thine Emperor promised¹⁹⁹
Long since, a formal offer of the hand Of Philip ?

Renard. Nay, your Grace, it hath not reach'd me.

I know not wherefore — some mischance of flood,
And broken bridge, or spavin'd horse,
or wave

And wind at their old battle ; he must have written.

Mary. But Philip never writes me one poor word,
Which in his absence had been all my wealth.

Strange in a wooer !

Renard. Yet I know the Prince,
So your king-parliament suffer him to land,

Yearns to set foot upon your island shore.

Mary. God change the pebble which his kingly foot²¹⁰

First presses into some more costly stone

Than ever blinded eye ! I'll have one mark it

And bring it me. I'll have it burnish'd firelike ;

I'll set it round with gold, with pearl, with diamond.

Let the great angel of the Church come with him,

Stand on the deck and spread his wings for sail !

God lay the waves and strow the storms at sea,

And here at land among the people !
O Renard,

I am much beset, I am almost in despair.

Paget is ours. Gardiner perchance is ours ;²²⁰

But for our heretic Parliament —

Renard. O madam,
You fly your thoughts like kites. My master, Charles,

Bade you go softly with your heretics here,

Until your throne had ceased to tremble. Then

Spit them like larks for aught I care. Besides,

When Henry broke the carcase of your church

To pieces, there were many wolves among you

Who dragg'd the scatter'd limbs into their den.

The Pope would have you make them render these ;

So would your cousin, Cardinal Pole — ill counsel !²³⁰

These let them keep at present ; stir not yet

This matter of the Church lands. At
his coming
Your star will rise.

Mary. My star! a baleful one.
I see but the black night, and hear the
wolf.

What star?

Renard. Your star will be your
princely son,
Heir of this England and the Nether-
lands!

And if your wolf the while should
howl for more,
We'll dust him from a bag of Spanish
gold.

I do believe — I have dusted some al-
ready —

That, soon or late, your Parliament is
ours. 240

Mary. Why do they talk so foully
of your Prince;

Renard?

Renard. The lot of princes. To
sit high
Is to be lied about.

Mary. They call him cold,
Haughty, ay, worse.

Renard. Why, doubtless, Philip
shows
Some of the bearing of your blue blood
— still

All within measure -- nay, it well be-
comes him.

Mary. Hath he the large ability of
his father?

Renard. Nay, some believe that he
will go beyond him.

Mary. Is this like him?

Renard. Ay, somewhat; but your
Philip
Is the most princelike prince beneath
the sun. 250

This is a daub to Philip.

Mary. Of a pure life?

Renard. As an angel among angels.

Yea, by Heaven,
The text — Your Highness knows
it, 'Whosoever
Looketh after a woman,' would not
graze

The Prince of Spain. You are happy
in him there,

Chaste as your Grace!

Mary. I am happy in him there.

Renard. And would be altogether
happy, madam,

So that your sister were but look'd to
closer.

You have sent her from the court, but
then she goes, 259

I warrant, not to hear the nightingales,
But hatch you some new treason in the
woods.

Mary. We have our spies abroad to
catch her tripping,

And then, if caught, to the Tower.

Renard. The Tower! the block!
The word has turn'd your Highness
pale; the thing

Was no such scarecrow in your father's
time.

I have heard, the tongue yet quiver'd
with the jest

When the head leapt — so common!
I do think,

To save your crown, that it must
come to this.

Mary. No, Renard; it must never
come to this.

Renard. Not yet; but your old
traitors of the Tower — 270

Why, when you put Northumberland
to death,

The sentence having passed upon
them all,

Spared you the Duke of Suffolk,
Guildford Dudley,

Even that young girl who dared to
wear your crown?

Mary. Dared? nay, not so; the
child obey'd her father.

Spite of her tears her father forced it
on her.

Renard. Good madam, when the
Roman wish'd to reign,

He slew not him alone who wore the
purple,

But his assessor in the throne, per-
chance 279

A child more innocent than Lady Jane.

Mary. I am English Queen, not
Roman Emperor.

Renard. Yet too much mercy is a
want of mercy,

And wastes more life. Stamp out the
fire, or this

Will smoulder and re-flame, and burn
the throne

Where you should sit with Philip.
He will not come

Till she be gone.

Mary. Indeed, if that were true —

For Philip comes, one hand in mine,
and one
Steadying the tremulous pillars of the
Church —

But no, no, no ! Farewell. I am
somewhat faint
With our long talk. Tho' Queen, I
am not Queen ²⁹⁰
Of mine own heart, which every now
and then

Beats me half dead. Yet stay, this
golden chain —

My father on a birthday gave it me,
And I have broken with my father —
take

And wear it as memorial of a morn-
ing

Which found me full of foolish doubts,
and leaves me

As hopeful.

Renard (aside). Whew — the folly
of all follies

Is to be lovesick for a shadow.
(*Aloud.*) Madam,

This chains me to your service, not
with gold,

But dearest links of love. Farewell,
and trust me, ³⁰⁰

Philip is yours. [*Exit.*]

Mary. Mine — but not yet all
mine.

Enter USHER.

Usher. Your Council is in session,
please your Majesty.

Mary. Sir, let them sit. I must
have time to breathe.

No, say I come. (*Exit Usher.*) I won
by boldness once.

The Emperor counsell'd me to fly to
Flanders.

I would not ; but a hundred miles I
rode,

Sent out my letters, call'd my friends
together,

Struck home and won.

And when the Council would not
crown me — thought

To bind me first by oaths I could not
keep, ³¹⁰

And keep with Christ and conscience
— was it boldness

Or weakness that won there ? when I,
their Queen,

Cast myself down upon my knees be-
fore them,

And those hard men brake into wo-
man-tears,

Even Gardiner, all amazed, and in that
passion

Gave me my Crown.

Enter ALICE.

Girl, hast thou ever heard
Slanders against Prince Philip in our
Court ?

Alice. What slanders ? I, your
Grace ? no, never.

Mary. Nothing ?

Alice. Never, your Grace.

Mary. See that you neither hear
them nor repeat ! ³²⁰

Alice (aside). Good Lord ! but I
have heard a thousand such —

Ay, and repeated them as often —
mum !

Why comes that old fox-Fleming back
again ?

Enter RENARD.

Renard. Madam, I scarce had left
your Grace's presence

Before I chanced upon the messen-
ger

Who brings that letter which we
waited for —

The formal offer of Prince Philip's
hand.

It craves an instant answer, Ay or No.

Mary. An instant Ay or No ! the
Council sits.

Give it me quick.

Alice (stepping before her). Your
Highness is all trembling. ³³⁰

Mary. Make way.

[*Exit into the Council Chamber.*]

Alice. O Master Renard, Master
Renard,

If you have falsely painted your fine
Prince,

Praised where you should have
blamed him, I pray God

No woman ever love you, Master Re-
nard !

It breaks my heart to hear her moan
at night

As tho' the nightmare never left her
bed.

Renard. My pretty maiden, tell me,
did you ever

Sigh for a beard ?

Alice. That's not a pretty question

Renard. Not prettily put? I mean,
my pretty maiden, ³³⁹
A pretty man for such a pretty maiden.

Alice. My Lord of Devon is a
pretty man.
I hate him. Well, but if I have, what
then?

Renard. Then, pretty maiden, you
should know that whether
A wind be warm or cold, it serves to
fan
A kindled fire.

Alice. According to the song.
His friends would praise him, I believed
'em,
His foes would blame him, and I scorn'd
'em,
His friends — as angels I received 'em,
His foes — the devil had suborn'd 'em.

Renard. Peace, pretty maiden.
I hear them stirring in the Council
Chamber. ³⁵¹
Lord Paget's 'Ay' is sure — who else?
and yet,
They are all too much at odds to close
at once
In one full-throated No! Her High-
ness comes.

Enter MARY.

Alice. How deathly pale! — a chair,
your Highness.
[*Bringing one to the Queen.*
Renard. Madam,
The Council?

Mary. Ay! My Philip is all mine.
[*Sinks into chair, half fainting.*

ACT II

SCENE I. — ALINGTON CASTLE

Sir Thomas Wyatt. I do not hear
from Carew or the Duke
Of Suffolk, and till then I should not
move.
The Duke hath gone to Leicester;
Carew stirs
In Devon; that fine porcelain Courte-
nay,
Save that he fears he might be crack'd
in using —
I have known a semi-madman in my
time
So fancy-ridden — should be in Devon
too.

Enter WILLIAM.

News abroad, William? ⁸

William. None so new, Sir Thomas,
and none so old, Sir Thomas. No
new news that Philip comes to wed
Mary, no old news that all men hate
it. Old Sir Thomas would have hated
it. The bells are ringing at Maid-
stone. Does n't your worship hear?

Wyatt. Ay, for the Saints are come
to reign again.
Most like it is a Saint's-day. There's
no call

As yet for me; so in this pause, before
The mine be fired, it were a pious
work

To string my father's sonnets, left
about ²⁰
Like loosely-scatter'd jewels, in fair
order,

And head them with a lamer rhyme
of mine,
To grace his memory.

William. Ay, why not, Sir Thomas?
He was a fine courtier, he; Queen
Anne loved him. All the women loved
him. I loved him, I was in Spain
with him. I could n't eat in Spain, I
could n't sleep in Spain. I hate Spain,
Sir Thomas. ³⁰

Wyatt. But thou couldst drink in
Spain if I remember.

William. Sir Thomas, we may grant
the wine. Old Sir Thomas always
granted the wine.

Wyatt. Hand me the casket with
my father's sonnets.

William. Ay — sonnets — a fine
courtier of the old Court, old Sir
Thomas. [*Exit.*

Wyatt. Courtier of many courts,
he loved the more

His own gray towers, plain life, and
letter'd peace, ⁴⁰

To read and rhyme in solitary fields,
The lark above, the nightingale below,
And answer them in song. The sire
begets

Not half his likeness in the son. I fail
Where he was fullest. Yet — to write
it down. [*He writes.*

Re-enter WILLIAM.

William. There is news, there is
news, and no call for sonnet-sorting
now, nor for sonnet-making either.

but ten thousand men on Penenden Heath all calling after your worship, and your worship's name heard into Maidstone market, and your worship the first man in Kent and Christendom, for the Queen's down, and the world's up, and your worship a-top of it.

Wyatt. Inverted Æsop — mountain out of mouse.
Say for ten thousand ten — and pot-house knaves,
Brain-dizzied with a draught of morning ale.

Enter ANTONY KNYVETT.

William. Here's Antony Knyvett.

Knyvett. Look you, Master Wyatt, Tear up that woman's work there.

Wyatt. No; not these,
Dumb children of my father, that will speak

When I and thou and all rebellions lie
Dead bodies without voice. Song flies, you know,

For ages.

Knyvett. Tut, your sonnet's a flying ant,
Wing'd for a moment.

Wyatt. Well, for mine own work,
[*Tearing the paper.*]

It lies there in six pieces at your feet;
For all that, I can carry it in my head.

Knyvett. If you can carry your head upon your shoulders.

Wyatt. I fear you come to carry it off my shoulders,
And sonnet-making's safer.

Knyvett. Why, good lord,
Write you as many sonnets as you will.

Ay, but not now; what, have you eyes, ears, brains?

This Philip and the black-faced swarms of Spain,

The hardest, cruellest people in the world,

Come locusting upon us, eat us up,
Confiscate lands, goods, money —

Wyatt, Wyatt.
Wake, or the stout old island will become

A rotten limb of Spain. They roar for you

On Penenden Heath, a thousand of them — more —

80

All arm'd, waiting a leader; there's no glory

Like his who saves his country. And you sit

Sing-singing here; but, if I'm any judge,

By God, you are as poor a poet, Wyatt,

As a good soldier.

Wyatt. You as poor a critic As an honest friend; you stroke me on one cheek,

Buffet the other. Come, you bluster, Antony!

You know I know all this. I must not move

Until I hear from Carew and the Duke. I fear the mine is fired before the time.

Knyvett (showing a paper). But here's some Hebrew. Faith, I half forgot it.

Look — can you make it English? A strange youth

Suddenly thrust it on me, whisper'd, 'Wyatt,'

And whisking round a corner, show'd his back

Before I read his face.

Wyatt. Ha! Courtenay's cipher.

[*Reads.*]
'Sir Peter Carew fled to France; it is thought the Duke will be taken. I am with you still; but, for appearance sake, stay with the Queen. Gardiner knows, but the Council are all at odds, and the Queen hath no force for resistance. Move, if you move, at once.'

103

Is Peter Carew fled? Is the Duke taken?

Down scabbard, and out sword! and let Rebellion

Roar till throne rock, and crown fall! No, not that;

But we will teach Queen Mary how to reign.

Who are those that shout below there?

Knyvett. Why, some fifty That follow'd me from Penenden Heath in hope

To hear you speak.

Wyatt. Open the window, Knyvett; The mine is fired, and I will speak to them.

111

Men of Kent, England of England, you that have kept your old customs upright, while all the rest of England bowed theirs to the Norman, the cause that hath brought us together is not the cause of a county or a shire, but of this England, in whose crown our Kent is the fairest jewel. Philip shall not wed Mary; and ye have called me to be your leader. I know Spain. I have been there with my father; I have seen them in their own land, have marked the haughtiness of their nobles, the cruelty of their priests. If this man marry our Queen, however the Council and the Commons may fence round his power with restriction, he will be King, King of England, my masters; and the Queen, and the laws, and the people, his slaves. What? shall we have Spain on the throne and in the parliament; Spain in the pulpit and on the law-bench; Spain in all the great offices of state; Spain in our ships, in our forts, in our houses, in our beds? 137

Crowd. No! no! no Spain!

William. No Spain in our beds — that were worse than all. I have been there with old Sir Thomas, and the beds I know. I hate Spain.

A Peasant. But, Sir Thomas, must we levy war against the Queen's Grace? 145

Wyatt. No, my friend; war for the Queen's Grace — to save her from herself and Philip — war against Spain. And think not we shall be alone — thousands will flock to us. The Council, the Court itself, is on our side. The Lord Chancellor himself is on our side. The King of France is with us; the King of Denmark is with us: the world is with us — war against Spain! And if we move not now, yet it will be known that we have moved; and if Philip come to be King, O my God! The rope, the rack, the thumb-screw, the stake, the fire. If we move not now, Spain moves, bribes our nobles with her gold, and creeps, creeps snake-like about our legs till we cannot move at all; and ye know,

my masters, that wherever Spain hath ruled she hath wither'd all beneath her. Look at the New World — a paradise made hell; the red man, that good helpless creature, starved, maim'd, flogg'd, flay'd, burn'd, boil'd, buried alive, worried by dogs; and here, nearer home, the Netherlands, Sicily, Naples, Lombardy. I say no more — only this, their lot is yours. Forward to London with me! forward to London! If ye love your liberties or your skins, forward to London!

Crowd. Forward to London! A

Wyatt! a Wyatt!

Wyatt. But first to Rochester, to take the guns
From out the vessels lying in the river. 180

Then on.

A Peasant. Ay, but I fear we be too few, Sir Thomas.

Wyatt. Not many yet. The world as yet, my friend,
Is not half-waked; but every parish tower

Shall clang and clash alarum as we pass,

And pour along the land, and, swollen and fed

With indraughts and side-currents, in full force

Roll upon London.

Crowd. A Wyatt! a Wyatt! Forward!

Knyvett. Wyatt, shall we proclaim Elizabeth?

Wyatt. I'll think upon it, Knyvett.
Knyvett. Or Lady Jane?

Wyatt. No, poor soul, no. 191
Ah, gray old castle of Alington, green field

Beside the brimming Medway, it may chance

That I shall never look upon you more.

Knyvett. Come, now, you're sonnetting again.

Wyatt. Not I.

I'll have my head set higher in the State;

Or — if the Lord God will it — on the stake. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II

GUILDHALL

SIR THOMAS WHITE (*The Lord Mayor*), LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, SIR RALPH BAGENHALL, ALDERMEN and CITIZENS.

White. I trust the Queen comes hither with her guards.

Howard. Ay, all in arms.

[*Several of the citizens move hastily out of the hall.*]

Why do they hurry out there ?

White. My lord, cut out the rotten from your apple,

Your apple eats the better. Let them go.

They go like those old Pharisees in John

Convicted by their conscience, arrant cowards,

Or tamperers with that treason out of Kent.

When will her Grace be here ?

Howard. In some few minutes. She will address your guilds and companies.

I have striven in vain to raise a man for her. ¹⁰

But help her in this exigency, make Your city loyal, and be the mightiest man

This day in England.

White. I am Thomas White. Few things have fail'd to which I set my will.

I do my most and best.

Howard. You know that after The Captain Brett, who went with your train bands

To fight with Wyatt, had gone over to him

With all his men, the Queen in that distress

Sent Cornwallis and Hastings to the traitor,

Feigning to treat with him about her marriage — ²⁰

Know too what Wyatt said.

White. He'd sooner be, While this same marriage question was being argued,

Trusted than trust — the scoundrel — and demanded

Possession of her person and the Tower.

Howard. And four of her poor Council too, my Lord,

As hostages.

White. I know it. What do and say

Your Council at this hour ?

Howard. I will trust you.

We fling ourselves on you, my lord. The Council,

The Parliament as well, are troubled waters ;

And yet like waters of the fen they know not ³⁰

Which way to flow. All hands on her address,

And upon you, Lord Mayor.

White. How look'd the city

When now you past it ? Quiet ?

Howard. Like our Council,

Your city is divided. As we past, Some hail'd, some hiss'd us. There

were citizens Stood each before his shut-up booth,

and look'd

As grim and grave as from a funeral. And here a knot of ruffians all in

rags,

With execrating execrable eyes, Glared at the citizen. Here was a

young mother, ⁴⁰

Her face on flame, her red hair all blown back,

She shrilling 'Wyatt,' while the boy she held

Mimick'd and piped her 'Wyatt,' as red as she

In hair and cheek ; and almost elbowing her,

So close they stood, another, mute as death,

And white as her own milk ; her babe in arms

Had felt the faltering of his mother's heart,

And look'd as bloodless. Here a pious Catholic,

Mumbling and mixing up in his scared prayers

Heaven and earth's Maries ; over his bow'd shoulder ⁵⁰

Scowl'd that world-hated and world-hating beast,

A haggard Anabaptist. Many such groups.

The names of Wyatt, Elizabeth, Courtenay,
 Nay, the Queen's right to reign —
 'fore God, the rogues ! —
 Were freely buzz'd among them. So
 I say
 Your city is divided, and I fear
 One scruple, this or that way, of success
 Would turn it thither. Wherefore
 now the Queen,
 In this low pulse and palsy of the
 state,
 Bade me to tell you that she counts on
 you 60
 And on myself as her two hands ; on
 you,
 In your own city, as her right, my lord,
 For you are loyal.

White. Am I Thomas White ?
 One word before she comes. Elizabeth —

Her name is much abused among these
 traitors.
 Where is she ? She is loved by all of
 us.

I scarce have heart to mingle in this
 matter,
 If she should be mishandled.

Howard. No, she shall not.
 The Queen had written her word to
 come to court :

Methought I smelt out Renard in the
 letter 70
 And fearing for her, sent a secret mis-
 sive,

Which told her to be sick. Happily
 or not,
 It found her sick indeed.

White. God send her well !
 Here comes her Royal Grace.

Enter GUARDS, MARY and GARDINER.
*SIR THOMAS WHITE leads her to a
 raised seat on the dais.*

White. I, the Lord Mayor, and
 these our companies
 And guilds of London, gathered here,
 beseech

Your Highness to accept our lowliest
 thanks

For your most princely presence ; and
 we pray

That we, your true and loyal citizens,
 From your own royal lips, at once may
 know 80

The wherefore of this coming, and so
 learn

Your royal will, and do it. — I, Lord
 Mayor

Of London, and our guilds and com-
 panies.

Mary. In mine own person am I
 come to you.

To tell you what indeed ye see and
 know,

How traitorously these rebels out of
 Kent

Have made strong head against our-
 selves and you.

They would not have me wed the
 Prince of Spain ;

That was their pretext — so they spake
 at first —

But we sent divers of our Council to
 them, 90

And by their answers to the question
 ask'd,

It doth appear this marriage is the
 least

Of all their quarrel.
 They have betrayed the treason of
 their hearts,

Seek to possess our person, hold our
 Tower,

Place and displace our councillors, and
 use

Both us and them according as they
 will.

Now what I am ye know right well —
 your Queen ;

To whom, when I was wedded to the
 realm

And the realm's laws — the spousal
 ring whereof, 100

Not ever to be laid aside, I wear
 Upon this finger — ye did promise
 full

Allegiance and obedience to the death.
 Ye know my father was the rightful
 heir

Of England, and his right came down
 to me,

Corroborate by your acts of Parlia-
 ment.

And as ye were most loving unto him,
 So doubtless will ye show yourselves
 to me.

Wherefore, ye will not brook that any
 one

Should seize our person, occupy our
 state, 110

More specially a traitor so presumptuous

As this same Wyatt, who hath tamper'd with

A public ignorance, and, under color
Of such a cause as hath no color,
seeks

To bend the laws to his own will, and
yield

Full scope to persons rascal and forlorn,

To make free spoil and havoc of your
goods.

Now, as your Prince, I say,
I, that was never mother, cannot tell

How mothers love their children; yet,
methinks, ¹²⁰

A prince as naturally may love his
people

As these their children; and be sure
your Queen

So loves you, and so loving, needs
must deem

This love by you return'd as heartily;
And thro' this common knot and bond
of love,

Doubt not they will be speedily over-
thrown.

As to this marriage, ye shall understand
We made thereto no treaty of our-
selves,

And set no foot theretoward unadvised
Of all our Privy Council; furthermore,

This marriage had the assent of those
to whom ¹³¹

The King, my father, did commit his
trust;

Who not alone esteem'd it honorable,
But for the wealth and glory of our
realm,

And all our loving subjects, most ex-
pedient.

As to myself,

I am not so set on wedlock as to
choose

But where I list, nor yet so amorous
That I must needs be husbanded; I

thank God,
I have lived a virgin, and I noway
doubt ¹⁴⁰

But that, with God's grace, I can live
so still.

Yet if it might please God that I
should leave

Some fruit of mine own body after
me,

To be your king, ye would rejoice
thereat,

And it would be your comfort, as I
trust;

And truly, if I either thought or
knew

This marriage should bring loss or dan-
ger to you,

My subjects, or impair in any way
This royal state of England, I would
never

Consent thereto, nor marry while I
live.

Moreover, if this marriage should not
seem, ¹⁵¹

Before our own High Court of Parlia-
ment,

To be of rich advantage to our realm,
We will refrain, and not alone from
this,

Likewise from any other, out of which
Looms the least chance of peril to our
realm.

Wherefore be bold, and with your
lawful Prince

Stand fast against our enemies and
yours,

And fear them not. I fear them not.
My lord,

I leave Lord William Howard in your
city, ¹⁶⁰

To guard and keep you whole and
safe from all

The spoil and sackage aim'd at by
these rebels,

Who mouth and foam against the
Prince of Spain.

Voices. Long live Queen Mary!
Down with Wyatt!

The Queen!

White. Three voices from our guilds
and companies!

You are shy and proud like English-
men, my masters,

And will not trust your voices. Under-
stand,

Your lawful Prince hath come to cast
herself

On loyal hearts and bosoms, hoped to
fall

Into the wide-spread arms of fealty,
And finds you statues. Speak at once
— and all! ¹⁷¹

For whom?

Our Sovereign Lady by King Harry's
will,

The Queen of England — or the Kentish Squire ?

I know you loyal. Speak ! in the name of God !

The Queen of England or the rabble of Kent ?

The reeking dungfork master of the mace !

Your havings wasted by the scythe and spade —

Your rights and charters hobnail'd into slush —

Your houses fired — your gutters bubbling blood — 180

Acclamation. No! No! The Queen! the Queen !

White. Your Highness hears This burst and bass of loyal harmony, And how we each and all of us abhor

The venomous, bestial, devilish revolt Of Thomas Wyatt. Hear us now make oath

To raise your Highness thirty thousand men,

And arm and strike as with one hand, and brush

This Wyatt from our shoulders, like a flea

That might have leapt upon us unawares.

Swear with me, noble fellow-citizens, all, 190

With all your trades, and guilds, and companies.

Citizens. We swear !

Mary. We thank your lordship and your loyal city.

[*Exit Mary, attended.*]

White. I trust this day, thro' God, I have saved the crown.

First Alderman. Ay, so my Lord of Pembroke in command Of all her force be safe ; but there are doubts.

Second Alderman. I hear that Gardiner, coming with the Queen, And meeting Pembroke, bent to his saddle-bow,

As if to win the man by flattering him. Is he so safe to fight upon her side ?

First Alderman. If not, there's no man safe.

White. Yes, Thomas White. I am safe enough ; no man need flatter me. 202

Second Alderman. Nay, no man need ; but did you mark our Queen ?

The color freely play'd into her face, And the half sight which makes her look so stern

Seem'd thro' that dim dilated world of hers

To read our faces ; I have never seen her

So queenly or so goodly.

White. Courage, sir, That makes or man or woman look their goodliest.

Die like the torn fox dumb, but never whine 210

Like that poor heart, Northumberland, at the block.

Bagenhall. The man had children, and he whined for those.

Methinks most men are but poor-hearted, else

Should we so dote on courage, were it commoner ?

The Queen stands up, and speaks for her own self ;

And all men cry, She is queenly, she is goodly.

Yet she's no goodlier ; tho' my Lord Mayor here,

By his own rule, he hath been so bold to-day,

Should look more goodly than the rest of us.

White. Goodly ? I feel most goodly, heart and hand, 220

And strong to throw ten Wyatts and all Kent.

Ha ! ha ! sir ; but you jest ; I love it. A jest

In time of danger shows the pulses even.

Be merry ! yet, Sir Ralph, you look but sad.

I dare avouch you'd stand up for yourself.

Tho' all the world should bay like winter wolves.

Bagenhall. Who knows ? the man is proven by the hour.

White. The man should make the hour, not this the man ;

And Thomas White will prove this Thomas Wyatt,

And he will prove an Iden to this Cade, 230

And he will play the Walworth to this Wat.

Come, sirs, we prate; hence all — gather your men —

Myself must bustle. Wyatt comes to Southwark;

I'll have the drawbridge hewn into the Thames,

And see the citizens arm'd. Good day; good day. [*Exit White.*]

Bagenhall. One of much outdoor bluster.

Howard. For all that, most honest, brave, and skilful; and his wealth

A fountain of perennial alms — his fault

So thoroughly to believe in his own self.

Bagenhall. Yet thoroughly to believe in one's own self, ²⁴⁰

So one's own self be thorough, were to do

Great things, my lord.

Howard. It may be.

Bagenhall. I have heard One of your Council flee and jeer at him.

Howard. The nursery-cocker'd child will jeer at aught

That may seem strange beyond his nursery.

The statesman that shall jeer and flee at men,

Makes enemies for himself and for his king;

And if he jeer, not seeing the true man

Behind his folly, he is thrice the fool;

And if he see the man and still will jeer, ²⁵⁰

He is child and fool, and traitor to the State.

Who is he? let me shun him.

Bagenhall. Nay, my lord, He is damn'd enough already.

Howard. I must set The guard at Ludgate. Fare you well, Sir Ralph.

Bagenhall. 'Who knows?' I am for England. But who knows,

That knows the Queen, the Spaniard, and the Pope,

Whether I be for Wyatt, or the Queen? [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III

LONDON BRIDGE

Enter SIR THOMAS WYATT and BRETT.

Wyatt. Brett, when the Duke of Norfolk moved against us Thou criest 'A Wyatt!' and flying to our side

Left his all bare, for which I love thee, Brett.

Have for thine asking aught that I can give,

For thro' thine help we are come to London Bridge;

But how to cross it balks me. I fear we cannot.

Brett. Nay, hardly, save by boat, swimming, or wings.

Wyatt. Last night I climb'd into the gate-house, Brett,

And scared the gray old porter and his wife.

And then I crept along the gloom and saw ¹⁰

They had hewn the drawbridge down into the river.

It roll'd as black as death; and that same tide

Which, coming with our coming, seem'd to smile

And sparkle like our fortune as thou saidst,

Ran sunless down, and moan'd against the piers.

But o'er the chasm I saw Lord William Howard

By torchlight, and his guard; four guns gaped at me,

Black, silent mouths. Had Howard spied me there

And made them speak, as well he might have done,

Their voice had left me none to tell you this. ²⁰

What shall we do?

Brett. On somehow. To go back Were to lose all.

Wyatt. On over London Bridge We cannot; stay we cannot; there is ordnance

On the White Tower and on the Devil's Tower,

And pointed full at Southwark. We
must round

By Kingston Bridge.

Brett. Ten miles about.

Wyatt. Even so.

But I have notice from our partisans
Within the city that they will stand
by us

If Ludgate can be reach'd by dawn
to-morrow. 29

Enter one of WYATT'S men.

Man. Sir Thomas, I've found this
paper; pray your worship read it; I
know not my letters; the old priests
taught me nothing.

Wyatt (reads). 'Whosoever will ap-
prehend the traitor Thomas Wyatt
shall have a hundred pounds for re-
ward.'

Man. Is that it? That's a big lot
of money.

Wyatt. Ay, ay, my friend; not
read it? 'tis not written

Half plain enough. Give me a piece
of paper! 40

[Writes 'THOMAS WYATT' large.]

There, any man can read that.

[Sticks it in his cap.]

Brett. But that's foolhardy.

Wyatt. No! boldness, which will
give my followers boldness.

Enter MAN with a prisoner.

Man. We found him, your wor-
ship, a-plundering o' Bishop Win-
chester's house; he says he's a poor
gentleman.

Wyatt. Gentleman! a thief! Go
hang him. Shall we make
Those that we come to serve our
sharpest foes?

Brett. Sir Thomas—

Wyatt. Hang him, I say.

Brett. Wyatt, but now you pro-
mised me a boon.

Wyatt. Ay, and I warrant this fine
fellow's life.

Brett. Even so; he was my neigh-
bor once in Kent.

He's poor enough, has drunk and
gambled out

All that he had, and gentleman he
was.

We have been glad together; let him
live.

Wyatt. He has gambled for his
life and lost, he hangs.

No, no, my word's my word. Take
thy poor gentleman!

Gamble thyself at once out of my
sight,

Or I will dig thee with my dagger.
Away! 60

Women and children!

*Enter a CROWD of WOMEN and CHILD-
DREN.*

First Woman. O Sir Thomas, Sir
Thomas, pray you go away, Sir
Thomas, or you'll make the White
Tower a black 'un for us this blessed
day. He'll be the death on us; and
you'll set the Devil's Tower a-spit-
ting, and he'll smash all our bits o'
things worse than Philip o' Spain. 69

Second Woman. Don't ye now go to
think that we be for Philip o' Spain.

Third Woman. No, we know that
ye be come to kill the Queen, and
we'll pray for you all on our bended
knees. But o' God's mercy don't ye
kill the Queen here, Sir Thomas;
look ye, here's little Dickon, and little
Robin, and little Jenny—though
she's but a side-cousin—and all on
our knees, we pray you to kill the
Queen further off, Sir Thomas. 81

Wyatt. My friends, I have not
come to kill the Queen

Or here or there; I come to save you
all,

And I'll go further off.

Crowd. Thanks, Sir Thomas, we
be beholden to you, and we'll pray
for you on our bended knees till our
lives' end.

Wyatt. Be happy, I am your friend.
To Kingston, forward!

[Exeunt.]

SCENE IV

ROOM IN THE GATE-HOUSE OF WEST-
MINSTER PALACE

MARY, ALICE, GARDINER, RENARD,
LADIES.

Gardiner. Their cry is, Philip
never shall be king.

Mary. Lord Pembroke in command
of all our force

Will front their cry and shatter them
into dust.

Alice. Was not Lord Pembroke
with Northumberland?
O madam, if this Pembroke should be
false!

Mary. No, girl; most brave and
loyal, brave and loyal.
His breaking with Northumberland
broke Northumberland.
At the park gate he hovers with our
guards.
These Kentish plowmen cannot break
the guards.

Enter MESSENGER.

Messenger. Wyatt, your Grace, hath
broken thro' the guards 10
And gone to Ludgate.

Gardiner. Madam, I much fear
That all is lost; but we can save your
Grace.

The river still is free. I do beseech
you,
There yet is time, take boat and pass
to Windsor.

Mary. I pass to Windsor and I lose
my crown.

Gardiner. Pass, then, I pray your
Highness, to the Tower.

Mary. I shall but be their prisoner
in the Tower.

Cries without. The traitor! treason!
Pembroke!

Ladies. Treason! treason!

Mary. Peace.
False to Northumberland, is he false
to me? 20

Bear witness, Renard, that I live and
die

The true and faithful bride of Philip
— A sound

Of feet and voices thickening hither
— blows —

Hark, there is battle at the palace
gates,

And I will out upon the gallery.

Ladies. No, no, your Grace; see
there the arrows flying.

Mary. I am Harry's daughter, Tu-
dor, and not Fear.

[*Goes out on the gallery.*]

The guards are all driven in, skulk
into corners

Like rabbits to their holes. A gra-
cious guard

Truly; shame on them! they have
shut the gates! 30

Enter SIR ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

Southwell. The porter, please your
Grace, hath shut the gates
On friend and foe. Your gentlemen-
at-arms,

If this be not your Grace's order,
cry

To have the gates set wide again, and
they

With their good battle-axes will do
you right

Against all traitors.

Mary. They are the flower of Eng-
land; set the gates wide.

[*Exit Southwell.*]

Enter COURTENAY.

Courtenay. All lost, all lost, all
yielded! A barge, a barge!

The Queen must to the Tower.

Mary. Whence come you, sir?

Courtenay. From Charing Cross;
the rebels broke us there, 40

And I sped hither with what haste I
might

To save my royal cousin.

Mary. Where is Pembroke?

Courtenay. I left him somewhere
in the thick of it.

Mary. Left him and fled; and thou
that wouldst be King,

And hast nor heart nor honor! I my-
self

Will down into the battle and there
bide

The upshot of my quarrel, or die with
those

That are no cowards and no Courte-
nays.

Courtenay. I do not love your Grace
should call me coward.

Enter another MESSENGER.

Messenger. Over, your Grace, all
crush'd; the brave Lord William
Thrust him from Ludgate, and the
traitor flying 51

To Temple Bar, there by Sir Maurice
Berkeley

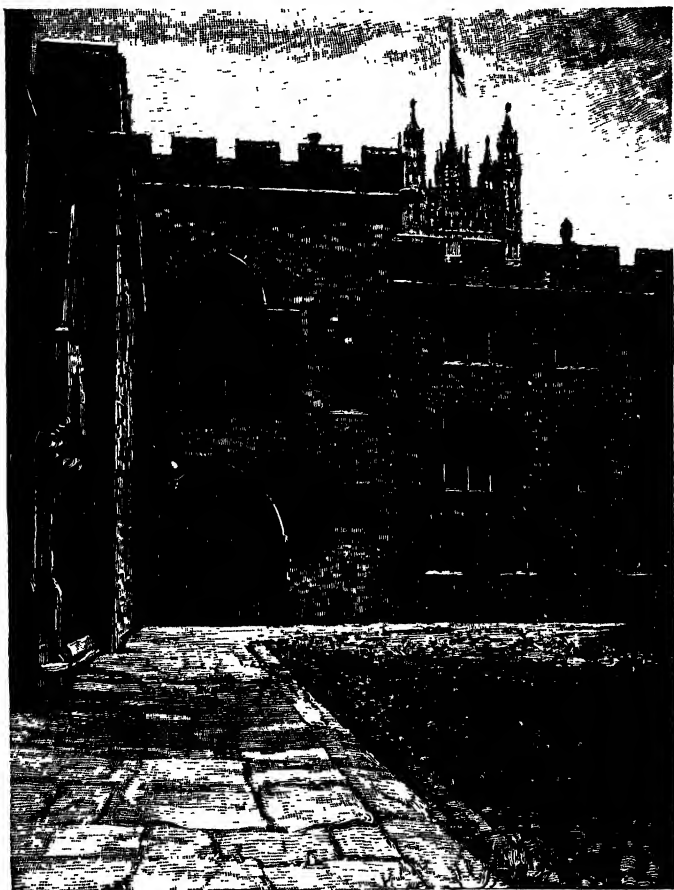
Was taken prisoner.

Mary. To the Tower with him!

Messenger. 'Tis said he told Sir
Maurice there was one

Cognizant of this, and party thereunto,
My Lord of Devon.

Mary. To the Tower with him!



GATE-HOUSE, WESTMINSTER

Courtenay. O la, the Tower, the Tower, always the Tower, I shall grow into it—I shall be the Tower.

Mary. Your lordship may not have so long to wait.
Remove him!

Courtenay. La, to whistle out my life,
And carve my coat upon the walls again!

[*Exit Courtenay, guarded.*]

Messenger. Also this Wyatt did confess the Princess
Cognizant thereof, and party thereunto.

Mary. What? whom—whom did you say?

Messenger. Elizabeth,
Your royal sister.

Mary. To the Tower with her!
My foes are at my feet, and I an Queen.

[*Gardiner and her Ladies kneel to her*]

Gardiner (rising). There let them lie, your footstool! (*Aside.*) Can I strike Elizabeth?—not now and save the life Of Devon. If I save him, he and his Are bound to me—may strike hereafter. (*Aloud.*) Madam, ⁷⁰ What Wyatt said, or what they said he said, Cries of the moment and the street—*Mary.* He said it. *Gardiner.* Your courts of justice will determine that. *Renard (advancing).* I trust by this your Highness will allow Some spice of wisdom in my telling you, When last we talk'd, that Philip would not come Till Guildford Dudley and the Duke of Suffolk ⁷⁷ And Lady Jane had left us. *Mary.* They shall die. *Renard.* And your so loving sister? *Mary.* She shall die. My foes are at my feet, and Philip King. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT III

SCENE I.—THE CONDUIT IN GRACE-CHURCH

Painted with the Nine Worthies, among them King Henry VIII. holding a book, on it inscribed 'Verbum Dei.'

Enter SIR RALPH BAGENHALL and SIR THOMAS STAFFORD.

Bagenhall. A hundred here and hundreds hang'd in Kent. The tigress had unsheath'd her nails at last, And Renard and the Chancellor sharp-en'd them. In every London street a gibbet stood. They are down to-day. Here by this house was one; The traitor husband dangled at the door, And when the traitor wife came out for bread To still the petty treason therewithin, Her cap would brush his heels. *Stafford.* It is Sir Ralph,

And muttering to himself as heretofore. ¹⁰

Sir, see you aught up yonder? *Bagenhall.* I miss something.

The tree that only bears dead fruit is gone.

Stafford. What tree, sir?

Bagenhall. Well, the tree in Virgil, sir,

That bears not its own apples.

Stafford. What! the gallows?

Bagenhall. Sir, this dead fruit was ripening overmuch,

And had to be removed lest living Spain

Should sicken at dead England.

Stafford. Not so dead

But that a shock may rouse her.

Bagenhall. I believe

Sir Thomas Stafford?

Stafford. I am ill disguised.

Bagenhall. Well, are you not in peril here?

Stafford. I think so. ²⁰

I came to feel the pulse of England, whether

It beats hard at this marriage. Did you see it?

Bagenhall. Stafford, I am a sad man and a serious.

Far liefer had I in my country hall Been reading some old book, with mine old hound

Couch'd at my hearth, and mine old flask of wine

Beside me, than have seen it; yet I saw it.

Stafford. Good, was it splendid?

Bagenhall. Ay, if dukes, and earls, And counts, and sixty Spanish cavaliers,

Some six or seven bishops, diamonds, pearls, ³⁰

That royal commonplace too, cloth of gold,

Could make it so.

Stafford. And what was Mary's dress?

Bagenhall. Good faith, I was too sorry for the woman

To mark the dress. She wore red shoes!

Stafford. Red shoes!

Bagenhall. Scarlet, as if her feet were wash'd in blood,

As if she had waded in it.

Stafford. Were your eyes
So bashful that you look'd no higher?

Bagenhall. A diamond,
And Philip's gift, as proof of Philip's
love,

Who hath not any for any, — tho' a
true one, 39

Blazed false upon her heart.

Stafford. But this proud Prince —

Bagenhall. Nay, he is King, you
know, the King of Naples.

The father ceded Naples that the son,
Being a King, might wed a Queen —
O, he

Flamed in brocade — white satin his
trunk-hose,

Inwrought with silver, — on his neck
a collar,

Gold, thick with diamonds; hanging
down from this

The Golden Fleece — and round his
knee, misplaced,

Our English Garter, studded with
great emeralds,

Rubies, I know not what. Have you
had enough

Of all this gear?

Stafford. Ay, since you hate the
telling it. 50

How look'd the Queen?

Bagenhall. No fairer for her jewels.
And I could see that as the new-made
couple

Came from the Minster, moving side
by side

Beneath one canopy, ever and anon
She cast on him a vassal smile of love,

Which Philip with a glance of some
distaste,

Or so methought, return'd. I may be
wrong, sir.

This marriage will not hold.

Stafford. I think with you.
The King of France will help to break
it.

Bagenhall. France!

We once had half of France, and
hurl'd our battles 60

Into the heart of Spain; but England
now

Is but a ball chuck'd between France
and Spain,

His in whose hand she drops. Harry
of Bolingbroke

Had holpen Richard's tottering throne
to stand,

Could Harry have foreseen that all our
nobles

Would perish on the civil slaughter-
field,

And leave the people naked to the
Crown,

And the Crown naked to the people;
the Crown

Female, too! Sir, no woman's regimen
Can save us. We are fallen, and, as

I think, 70
Never to rise again.

Stafford. You are too black-blooded.
I'd make a move myself to hinder
that;

I know some lusty fellows there in
France.

Bagenhall. You would but make
us weaker, Thomas Stafford.

Wyatt was a good soldier, yet he
fail'd,

And strengthen'd Philip.

Stafford. Did not his last breath
Clear Courtenay and the Princess from
the charge

Of being his co-rebels?

Bagenhall. Ay, but then
What such a one as Wyatt says is
nothing;

We have no men among us. The
new lords 80

Are quieted with their sop of Abbey-
lands,

And even before the Queen's face Gar-
diner buys them

With Philip's gold. All greed, no
faith, no courage!

Why, even the haughty prince, North-
umberland,

The leader of our Reformation, knelt
And blubber'd like a lad, and on the

scaffold

Recanted, and resold himself to Rome.

Stafford. I swear you do your
country wrong, Sir Ralph.

I know a set of exiles over there,
Dare-devils, that would eat fire and

spit it out 90
At Philip's beard; they pillage Spain
already.

The French King winks at it. An
hour will come

When they will sweep her from the
seas. No men?

Did not Lord Suffolk die like a true
man?

Is not Lord William Howard a true man?

Yea, you yourself, altho' you are black-blooded;

And I, by God, believe myself a man. Ay, even in the church there is a man —

Cranmer.

Fly would he not, when all men bade him fly. 100

And what a letter he wrote against the Pope!

There's a brave man, if any.

Bagenhall. Ay; if it hold.

Crowd (coming on). God save their Graces!

Stafford. Bagenhall, I see The Tudor green and white. (*Trumpets.*) They are coming now.

And here's a crowd as thick as herring-shoals.

Bagenhall. Be limpets to this pillar, or we are torn

Down the strong wave of brawlers.

Crowd. God save their Graces!

Procession of Trumpeters, Javelinmen, etc.; then Spanish and Flemish Nobles intermingled.

Stafford. Worth seeing, Bagenhall! These black dog-Dons

Garb themselves bravely. Who's the long-face there, 110

Looks very Spain of very Spain?

Bagenhall. The Duke

Of Alva, an iron soldier.

Stafford. And the Dutchman,

Now laughing at some jest?

Bagenhall. William of Orange, William the Silent.

Stafford. Why do they call him so?

Bagenhall. He keeps, they say, some secret that may cost

Philip his life.

Stafford. But then he looks so merry.

Bagenhall. I cannot tell you why they call him so.

[*The King and Queen pass, attended by Peers of the Realm, Officers of State, etc. Cannon shot off.*

Crowd. Philip and Mary, Philip and Mary!

Long live the King and Queen, Philip and Mary!

Stafford. They smile as if content with one another. 120

Bagenhall. A smile abroad is oft a scowl at home.

[*King and Queen pass on. Procession.*

First Citizen. I thought this Philip had been one of those black devils of Spain, but he hath a yellow beard.

Second Citizen. Not red like Iscariot's.

First Citizen. Like a carrot's, as thou say'st, and English carrot's better than Spanish licorice; but I thought he was a beast. 130

Third Citizen. Certain I had heard that every Spaniard carries a tail like a devil under his trunk-hose.

Tailor. Ay, but see what trunk-hoses! Lord! they be fine; I never stitch'd none such. They make amends for the tails.

Fourth Citizen. Tut! every Spanish priest will tell you that all English heretics have tails. 140

Fifth Citizen. Death and the devil — if he find I have one —

Fourth Citizen. Lo! thou hast call'd them up! here they come — a pale horse for Death, and Gardiner for the devil.

Enter GARDINER (turning back from the procession.)

Gardiner. Knave, wilt thou wear thy cap before the Queen?

Man. My lord, I stand so squeezed among the crowd

I cannot lift my hands unto my head.

Gardiner. Knock off his cap there, some of you about him! 150

See there be others that can use their hands.

Thou art one of Wyatt's men?

Man. No, my lord, no.

Gardiner. Thy name, thou knave?

Man. I am nobody, my lord.

Gardiner (shouting). God's passion! knave, thy name?

Man. I have ears to hear.

Gardiner. Ay, rascal, if I leave thee ears to hear.

Find out his name and bring it me (*to Attendant*).

Attendant. Ay, my lord.

Gardiner. Knave, thou shalt lose
thine ears and find thy tongue,
And shalt be thankful if I leave thee
that.

[*Coming before the Conduit.*
The conduit painted — the Nine Wor-
thies — ay !

But then what's here ? King Harry
with a scroll. ¹⁶⁰

Ha — Verbum Dei — verbum — Word
of God !

God's passion ! do you know the knave
that painted it ?

Attendant. I do, my lord.

Gardiner. Tell him to paint it out,
And put some fresh device in lieu of
it —

A pair of gloves, a pair of gloves, sir ; ha ?
There is no heresy there.

Attendant. I will, my lord ;
The man shall paint a pair of gloves.

I am sure —
Knowing the man — he wrought it
ignorantly,
And not from any malice.

Gardiner. Word of God
In English ! over this the brainless
loons ¹⁷⁰

That cannot spell Esaias from Saint
Paul,

Make themselves drunk and mad, fly
out and flare

Into rebellions. I'll have their Bibles
burnt.

The Bible is the priest's. Ay ! fellow,
what !

Stand staring at me ! shout, you gap-
ing rogue !

Man. I have, my lord, shouted till
I am hoarse.

Gardiner. What hast thou shouted,
knave ?

Man. Long live Queen Mary !

Gardiner. Knave, there be two.
There be both King and Queen,
Philip and Mary. Shout !

Man. Nay, but, my lord,
The Queen comes first, Mary and
Philip.

Gardiner. Shout, then, ¹⁸⁰
Mary and Philip !

Man. Mary and Philip !

Gardiner. Now,
Thou hast shouted for thy pleasure,
shout for mine !

Philip and Mary !

Man. Must it be so, my lord ?

Gardiner. Ay, knave.

Man. Philip and Mary.

Gardiner. I distrust thee.

Thine is a half voice and a lean as-
sent.

What is thy name ?

Man. Sanders.

Gardiner. What else ?

Man. Zerubbabel

Gardiner. Where dost thou live ?

Man. In Cornhill.

Gardiner. Where, knave, where ?

Man. Sign of the Talbot.

Gardiner. Come to me to-mor-
row. —

Rascal ! — this land is like a hill of
fire,

One crater opens when another shuts.
But so I get the laws against the
heretic, ¹⁹¹

Spite of Lord Paget and Lord William
Howard,

And others of our Parliament, re-
vived,

I will show fire on my side — stake
and fire —

Sharp work and short. The knaves
are easily cowed.

Follow their Majesties.

[*Exit. The crowd following.*

Bagenhall. As proud as Becket

Stafford. You would not have him
murder'd as Becket was ?

Bagenhall. No — murder fathers
murder ; but I say

There is no man — there was one wo-
man with us —

It was a sin to love her married,
dead ²⁰⁰

I cannot choose but love her.

Stafford. Lady Jane ?

Crowd (going off). God save their
Graces !

Stafford. Did you see her die ?

Bagenhall. No, no ; her innocent
blood had blinded me.

You call me too black-blooded — true
enough,

Her dark, dead blood is in my heart
with mine.

If ever I cry out against the Pope

Her dark, dead blood that ever moves
with mine

Will stir the living tongue and make
the cry.

Stafford. Yet doubtless you can tell
me how she died ? 209

Bagenhall. Seventeen — and knew
eight languages — in music
Peerless — her needle perfect, and her
learning
Beyond the churchmen ; yet so meek,
so modest,
So wife-like humble to the trivial
boy
Mismatch'd with her for policy ! I
have heard

She would not take a last farewell of
him ;
She fear'd it might unman him for his
end.

She could not be unmann'd — no, nor
outwoman'd —

Seventeen — a rose of grace !

Girl never breathed to rival such a
rose ;
Rose never blew that equall'd such a
bud. 220

Stafford. Pray you go on.

Bagenhall. She came upon the scaf-
fold,

And said she was condemn'd to die
for treason ;

She had but follow'd the device of
those

Her nearest kin ; she thought they
knew the laws.

But for herself, she knew but little
law,

And nothing of the titles to the
crown ;

She had no desire for that, and wrung
her hands,

And trusted God would save her thro'
the blood

Of Jesus Christ alone.

Stafford. Pray you go on.

Bagenhall. Then knelt and said the
Miserere Mei — 230

But all in English, mark you ; rose
again,

And, when the headsman pray'd to be
forgiven,

Said, ' You will give me my true crown
at last,

But do it quickly ; ' then all wept but
she,

Who changed not color when she saw
the block,

But ask'd him, childlike, ' Will you
take it off

Before I lay me down ? ' ' No, madam,'
he said,

Gaspings ; and when her innocent eyes
were bound,

She, with her poor blind hands feeling
— ' Where is it ?

Where is it ? ' — You must fancy that
which follow'd, 240

If you have heart to do it !

Crowd (in the distance). God save
their Graces !

Stafford. Their Graces, our dis-
graces ! God confound them !

Why, she's grown bloodier ! when I
last was here,

This was against her conscience —
would be murder !

Bagenhall. The ' Thou shalt do no
murder,' which God's hand

Wrote on her conscience, Mary rubb'd
out pale —

She could not make it white — and
over that,

Traced in the blackest text of hell —
' Thou shalt ! ' —

And sign'd it — Mary !

Stafford. Philip and the Pope
Must have sign'd too. I hear this le-
gate's coming 250

To bring us absolution from the Pope
The Lords and Commons will bow
down before him —

You are of the house ? what will you
do, Sir Ralph ?

Bagenhall. And why should I be
bolder than the rest,

Or honestest than all ?

Stafford. But, sir, if I —
And over-sea they say this State of
yours

Hath no more mortise than a tower of
cards ;

And that a puff would do it — then
if I

And others made that move I touched
upon,

Back'd by the power of France, and
landing here, 260

Came with a sudden splendor, shout,
and show,

And dazzled men and deafen'd by some
bright

Loud venture, and the people so un-
quiet —

And I the race of murder'd Bucking-
ham —

Not for myself, but for the kingdom
— Sir,

I trust that you would fight along
with us.

Bagenhall. No; you would fling
your lives into the gulf.

Stafford. But if this Philip, as he's
like to do,

Left Mary a wife-widow here alone,
Set up a viceroy, sent his myriads
hither

To seize upon the forts and fleet, and
make us

A Spanish province; would you not
fight then?

Bagenhall. I think I should fight
then.

Stafford. I am sure of it.

Hist! there's the face coming on here
of one

Who knows me. I must leave you.

Fare you well,

You'll hear of me again.

Bagenhall. Upon the scaffold.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II

ROOM IN WHITEHALL PALACE

MARY. *Enter* PHILIP and CARDINAL
POLE.

Pole. Ave Maria, gratia plena,
benedicta tu in mulieribus!

Mary. Loyal and royal cousin, hum-
blest thanks.

Had you a pleasant voyage up the
river?

Pole. We had your royal barge, and
that same chair,

Or rather throne of purple, on the
deck.

Our silver cross sparkled before the
prow,

The ripples twinkled at their diamond-
dance,

The boats that follow'd were as glow-
ing-gay

As regal gardens, and your flocks of
swans

As fair and white as angels; and your
shores

Wore in mine eyes the green of Para-
dise.

My foreign friends, who dream'd us
blanketed

In ever-closing fog, were much amazed
To find as fair a sun as might have
flash'd

Upon their lake of Garda fire the
Thames;

Our voyage by sea was all but mir-
acle;

And here the river flowing from the
sea,

Not toward it—for they thought not
of our tides—

Seem'd as a happy miracle to make
glide—

In quiet—home your banish'd coun-
tryman.

Mary. We heard that you were sick
in Flanders, cousin.

Pole. A dizziness.

Mary. And how came you round
again?

Pole. The scarlet thread of Rahab
saved her life;

And mine, a little letting of the blood.

Mary. Well? now?

Pole. Ay, cousin, as the heathen
giant

Had but to touch the ground, his force
return'd—

Thus, after twenty years of banish-
ment,

Feeling my native land beneath my
foot,

I said thereto: 'Ah, native land of
mine,

Thou art much beholden to this foot
of mine,

That hastes with full commission from
the Pope

To absolve thee from thy guilt of her-
esy.

Thou hast disgraced me and attainted
me,

And mark'd me even as Cain, and I
return

As Peter, but to bless thee; make me
well.'

Methinks the good land heard me, for
to-day

My heart beats twenty, when I see
you, cousin.

Ah, gentle cousin, since your Herod's
death,

How oft hath Peter knock'd at Mary's
gate!

And Mary would have risen and let
him in, ⁴⁰

But, Mary, there were those within the
house

Who would not have it.

Mary. True, good cousin Pole;
And there were also those without the
house

Who would not have it.

Pole. I believe so, cousin.
State-policy and church-policy are con-
joint,

But Janus-faces looking diverse ways.
I fear the Emperor much misvalued
me.

But all is well; 't was even the will
of God,

Who, waiting till the time had ripen'd,
now

Makes me His mouth of holy greeting.

'Hail, ⁵⁰
Daughter of God, and saver of the
faith.

Sit benedictus fructus ventris tui !'

Mary. Ah, heaven !

Pole. Unwell, your Grace ?

Mary. No, cousin, happy —
Happy to see you ; never yet so happy
Since I was crown'd.

Pole. Sweet cousin, you forget
That long low minster where you gave
your hand

To this great Catholic King.

Philip. Well said, Lord Legate.

Mary. Nay, not well said ; I thought
of you, my liege,

Even as I spoke.

Philip. Ay, madam ; my Lord
Paget

Waits to present our Council to the le-
gate. ⁶⁰

Sit down here, all ; madam, between
us you.

Pole. Lo, now you are enclosed with
boards of cedar,

Our little sister of the Song of Songs !
You are doubly fenced and shielded
sitting here

Between the two most high-set thrones
on earth,

The Emperor's highness happily sym-
boll'd by

The King your husband, the Pope's
holiness

By mine own self.

Mary. True, cousin, I am happy.

When will you that we summon both
our houses ⁶⁹

To take this absolution from your lips,
And be re-gather'd to the Papal fold ?

Pole. In Britain's calendar the
brightest day

Beheld our rough forefathers break
their gods,

And clasp the faith in Christ ; but
after that

Might not Saint Andrew's be her hap-
piest day ?

Mary. Then these shall meet upon
Saint Andrew's Day.

*Enter PAGET, who presents the Council.
Dumb show.*

Pole. I am an old man wearied with
my journey,

Even with my joy. Permit me to with-
draw.

To Lambeth ?

Philip. Ay, Lambeth has ousted
Cranmer.

It was not meet the heretic swine
should live ⁸⁰

In Lambeth.

Mary. There or anywhere, or at all.

Philip. We have had it swept and
garnish'd after him.

Pole. Not for the seven devils to
enter in ?

Philip. No, for we trust they parted
in the swine.

Pole. True, and I am the Angel of
the Pope.

Farewell, your Graces.

Philip. Nay, not here — to me ;
I will go with you to the waterside.

Pole. Not be my Charon to the
counter-side ?

Philip. No, my Lord Legate, the
Lord Chancellor goes.

Pole. And unto no dead world, but
Lambeth Palace, ⁹⁰

Henceforth a centre of the living faith.

[*Exeunt Philip, Pole, Paget, etc.*

Manet MARY.

Mary. He hath awaked ! he hath
awaked !

He stirs within the darkness !

O Philip, husband ! now thy love to
mine

Will cling more close, and those bleak
manners thaw,

That make me shamed and tongue-tied
in my love.

The second Prince of Peace —
The great unborn defender of the
Faith,

Who will avenge me of mine enemies —
He comes, and my star rises. ¹⁰⁰

The stormy Wyatts and Northumber-
lands,

The proud ambitions of Elizabeth,
And all her fieriest partisans — are pale
Before my star!

The light of this new learning wanes
and dies;

The ghosts of Luther and Zuinglius
fade

Into the deathless hell which is their
doom

Before my star!

His sceptre shall go forth from Ind to
Ind!

His sword shall hew the heretic peo-
ples down! ¹¹⁰

His faith shall clothe the world that
will be his,

Like universal air and sunshine! Open,
Ye everlasting gates! The King is
here! —

My star, my son!

Enter PHILIP, DUKE OF ALVA, etc.

O, Philip, come with me!
Good news have I to tell you, news to
make

Both of us happy — ay, the kingdom
too.

Nay, come with me — one moment!

Philip (to Alva). More than that;
There was one here of late — William
the Silent

They call him — he is free enough in
talk,

But tells me nothing. You will be,
we trust, ¹²⁰

Sometime the viceroy of those pro-
vinces —

He must deserve his surname better.

Alva. Ay, sir;
Inherit the Great Silence.

Philip. True; the provinces
Are hard to rule and must be hardly
ruled;

Most fruitful, yet, indeed, an empty
rind,

All hollow'd out with stinging her-
esies;

And for their heresies, Alva, they will
fight;

You must break them or they break
you.

Alva (proudly). The first.

Philip. Good!

Well, Madam, this new happiness of
mine? *[Exeunt.]*

Enter THREE PAGES.

First Page. News, mates! a miracle,
a miracle! news! ¹³¹

The bells must ring; Te Deums must
be sung;

The Queen hath felt the motion of her
babe!

Second Page. Ay; but see here!

First Page. See what?

Second Page. This paper, Dickon.
I found it fluttering at the palace
gates: —

'The Queen of England is delivered
of a dead dog!'

Third Page. These are the things
that madden her. Fie upon it!

First Page. Ay; but I hear she hath
a dropsy, lad,

Or a high-dropsy, as the doctors call it.

Third Page. Fie on her dropsy, so
she have a dropsy! ¹⁴⁰

I know that she was ever sweet to me.

First Page. For thou and thine are
Roman to the core.

Third Page. So thou and thine
must be. Take heed!

First Page. Not I;

And whether this flash of news be
false or true,

So the wine run, and there be revelry,
Content am I. Let all the steeples
clash,

Till the sun dance, as upon Easter
Day. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE III

GREAT HALL IN WHITEHALL

*At the far end a dais. On this three
chairs, two under one canopy for
MARY and PHILIP, another on the
right of these for POLE. Under the
dais on POLE's side, ranged along
the wall, sit all the Spiritual Peers,
and along the wall opposite all the*

Temporal. The Commons on cross benches in front, a line of approach to the dais between them. In the foreground, SIR RALPH BAGENHALL and other MEMBERS of the COMMONS.

First Member. Saint Andrew's Day;
sit close, sit close, we are friends.
Is reconciled the word? the Pope
again?

It must be thus; and yet, cockshody!
how strange

That Gardiner, once so one with all
of us

Against this foreign marriage, should
have yielded

So utterly!—strange! but stranger
still that he,

So fierce against the headship of the
Pope,

Should play the second actor in this
pageant

That brings him in; such a chameleon
he!

Second Member. This Gardiner turn'd
his coat in Henry's time; ¹⁰

The serpent that hath slough'd will
slough again.

Third Member. Tut, then we all are
serpents.

Second Member. Speak for yourself.

Third Member. Ay, and for Gardi-
ner! being English citizen,

How should he bear a bridegroom out
of Spain?

The Queen would have him! being
English churchman,

How should he bear the headship of
the Pope?

The Queen would have it! Statesmen
that are wise

Shape a necessity, as a sculptor
clay,

To their own model.

Second Member. Statesmen that are
wise

Take truth herself for model. What
say you? ²⁰

[*To Sir Ralph Bagenhall.*
Bagenhall. We talk and talk.

First Member. Ay, and what use to
talk?

Philip's no sudden alien—the Queen's
husband,

He's here, and King, or will be—yet,
cockshody!

So hated here! I watch'd a hive of
late;

My seven-years' friend was with me,
my young boy;

Out crept a wasp, with half the swarm
behind.

'Philip!' says he. I had to cuff the
rogue

For infant treason.

Third Member. But they say that
bees,

If any creeping life invade their hive
Too gross to be thrust out, will build
him round, ³⁰

And bind him in from harming of
their combs.

And Philip by these articles is bound
From stirring hand or foot to wrong
the realm.

Second Member. By bonds of bees-
wax, like your creeping thing;

But your wise bees had stung him
first to death.

Third Member. Hush, hush!
You wrong the Chancellor. The
clauses added

To that same treaty which the Em-
peror sent us

Were mainly Gardiner's: that no for-
eigner

Hold office in the household, fleet,
forts, army; ⁴⁰

That if the Queen should die without
a child,

The bond between the kingdoms be
dissolved;

That Philip should not mix us any way
With his French wars—

Second Member. Ay, ay, but what
security,

Good sir, for this, if Philip—

Third Member. Peace—the Queen,
Philip, and Pole. [*All rise, and stand.*

Enter MARY, PHILIP, and POLE.

[*Gardiner conducts them to the
three chairs of state. Philip sits
on the Queen's left, Pole on her
right.*

Gardiner. Our short-lived sun, be-
fore his winter plunge,

Laughs at the last red leaf, and An-
drew's Day.

Mary. Should not this day be held
in after years ⁴⁹

More solemn than of old?

Philip. Madam, my wish
Echoes your Majesty's.

Pole. It shall be so.

Gardiner. Mine echoes both your
Graces'; (*aside*) but the Pope—
Can we not have the Catholic Church
as well

Without as with the Italian? if we
cannot,

Why, then the Pope.

My lords of the upper house,
And ye, my masters, of the lower
house,

Presenting the whole body of this
realm

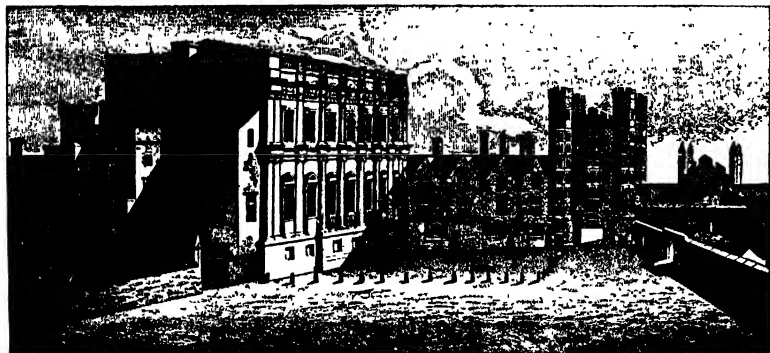
Of England, and dominions of the
same,

Do make most humble suit unto your
Majesties,

In our own name and that of all the
State,

That by your gracious means and in-
tercession

Our supplication be exhibited ⁷⁰
To the Lord Cardinal Pole, sent here
as legate



WHITEHALL

Do ye stand fast by that which ye
resolved?

Voices. We do.

Gardiner. And be you all one mind
to supplicate
The legate here for pardon, and ac-
knowledge ⁶⁰

The primacy of the Pope?

Voices. We are all one mind.

Gardiner. Then must I play the
vassal to this Pole. [*Aside.*

[*He draws a paper from under his
robes and presents it to the King
and Queen, who look through it
and return it to him; then as-
cends a tribune, and reads.*

We, the Lords Spiritual and Tem-
poral,
And Commons here in Parliament as-
sembled,

From our most Holy Father Julius,
Pope,

And from the Apostolic See of Rome;
And do declare our penitence and grief
For our long schism and disobedience,
Either in making laws and ordinances
Against the Holy Father's primacy,
Or else by doing or by speaking aught
Which might impugn or prejudice
the same;

By this our supplication promising, &c
As well for our own selves as all the
realm,

That now we be and ever shall be
quick,

Under and with your Majesties' au-
thorities,

To do to the utmost all that in us lies
Towards the abrogation and repeal
Of all such laws and ordinances made;
Whereon we humbly pray your Ma-
jesties,

As persons undefiled with our offence,
So to set forth this humble suit of ours
That we the rather by your interces-
sion 90

May from the Apostolic See obtain,
Thro' this most reverend father, abso-
lution,

And full release from danger of all
censures

Of Holy Church that we be fallen into,
So that we may, as children penitent,
Be once again received into the bosom
And unity of Universal Church;
And that this noble realm thro' after
years

May in this unity and obedience 99
Unto the holy see and reigning Pope
Serve God and both your Majesties.

Voices. Amen. *[All sit.*

*[He again presents the petition to
the King and Queen, who hand
it reverentially to Pole.*

Pole (sitting). This is the loveliest
day that ever smiled

On England. All her breath should,
incense-like,

Rise to the heavens in grateful praise
of Him

Who now recalls her to His ancient
fold.

Lo! once again God to this realm
hath given

A token of His more especial grace ;
For as this people were the first of all
The islands call'd into the dawning
church

Out of the dead, deep night of hea-
thendom, 110

So now are these the first whom God
hath given

Grace to repent and sorrow for their
schism ;

And if your penitence be not mock-
ery,

O, how the blessed angels who rejoice
Over one saved do triumph at this
hour

In the re-born salvation of a land
So noble ! [A pause.

For ourselves we do protest
That our commission is to heal, not
harm ;

We come not to condemn, but recon-
cile ;

We come not to compel, but call
again ; 120

We come not to destroy, but edify ;
Nor yet to question things already
done ;

These are forgiven— matters of the
past—

And range with jetsam and with offal
thrown

Into the blind sea of forgetfulness.

[A pause.
Ye have reversed the attainder laid on
us

By him who sack'd the house of God ;
and we,

Amplier than any field on our poor
earth

Can render thanks in fruit for being
sown,

Do here and now repay you sixty-
fold, 130

A hundred, yea, a thousand thousand-
fold,

With heaven for earth.

*[Rising and stretching forth his
hands. All kneel but Sir Ralph
Bagenhall, who rises and re-
mains standing.*

The Lord who hath redeem'd us
With His own blood, and wash'd us
from our sins,

To purchase for Himself a stainless
bride ;

He, whom the Father hath appointed
Head

Of all His church, He by His mercy
absolve you. [A pause.

And we by that authority Apostolic
Given unto us, his legate, by the Pope,
Our Lord and Holy Father, Julius,
God's Vicar and Vicegerent upon
earth, 140

Do here absolve you and deliver you
And every one of you, and all the
realm

And its dominions from all heresy,
All schism, and from all and every
censure,

Judgment, and pain accruing there-
upon ;

And also we restore you to the bosom
And unity of Universal Church.

[Turning to Gardiner.
Our letters of commission will declare
this plainlier.

*[Queen heard sobbing. Cries of
Amen! Amen! Some of the
Members embrace one another.*

All but Sir Ralph Bagenhall pass out into the neighboring chapel, whence is heard the Te Deum.

Bagenhall. We strove against the papacy from the first,
In William's time, in our first Edward's time, ¹⁵⁰
And in my master Henry's time; but now,
The unity of Universal Church,
Mary would have it; and this Gardiner follows.
The unity of Universal Hell,
Philip would have it; and this Gardiner follows!

A Parliament of imitative apes!
Sheep at the gap which Gardiner takes, who not
Believes the Pope, nor any of them believe —
These spaniel-Spaniard English of the time,
Who rub their fawning noses in the dust, ¹⁶⁰
For that is Philip's gold-dust, and adore
This Vicar of their Vicar. Would I had been
Born Spaniard! I had held my head up then.
I am ashamed that I am Bagenhall, English.

Enter OFFICER.

Officer. Sir Ralph Bagenhall!

Bagenhall. What of that?

Officer. You were the one sole man in either house
Who stood upright when both the houses fell.

Bagenhall. The houses fell!

Officer. I mean the houses knelt
Before the legate.

Bagenhall. Do not scrimp your phrase,
But stretch it wider; say when England fell. ¹⁷⁰

Officer. I say you were the one sole man who stood.

Bagenhall. I am the one sole man in either house,
Perchance in England, loves her like a son.

Officer. Well, you one man, because you stood upright,

Her Grace the Queen commands you to the Tower.

Bagenhall. As traitor, or as heretic, or for what?

Officer. If any man in any way would be

The one man, he shall be so to his cost.

Bagenhall. What! will she have my head?

Officer. A round fine likelier.

Your pardon. [*Calling to Attendant.*

By the river to the Tower.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV

WHITEHALL. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

MARY, GARDINER, POLE, PAGET, BONNER, *etc.*

Mary. The King and I, my lords, now that all traitors
Against our royal state have lost the heads

Wherewith they plotted in their treasonous malice,
Have talk'd together, and are well agreed

That those old statutes touching Lollardism

To bring the heretic to the stake, should be

No longer a dead letter, but re-quick-en'd.

One of the Council. Why, what hath fluster'd Gardiner? how he rubs
His forelock!

Paget. I have changed a word with him

In coming, and may change a word again. ¹⁰

Gardiner. Madam, your Highness is our sun, the King

And you together our two suns in one;
And so the beams of both may shine

upon us,
The faith that seem'd to droop will

feel your light,
Lift head, and flourish; yet not light

alone,
There must be heat — there must be

heat enough
To scorch and wither heresy to the

root.

For what saith Christ? 'Compel them to come in.'

And what saith Paul? 'I would they were cut off

That trouble you.' Let the dead letter live!

Trace it in fire, that all the louts to whom

Their A B C is darkness, clowns and grooms

May read it! so you quash rebellion too,

For heretic and traitor are all one; Two vipers of one breed — an amphis-

bæna, Each end a sting. Let the dead letter burn!

Paget. Yet there be some disloyal Catholics,

And many heretics loyal; heretic throats

Cried no God-bless-her to the Lady Jane,

But shouted in Queen Mary. So there be

Some traitor-heretic, there is axe and cord.

To take the lives of others that are loyal,

And by the churchman's pitiless doom of fire,

Were but a thankless policy in this crown,

Ay, and against itself; for there are many.

Mary. If we could burn out heresy, my Lord Paget,

We reckon not tho' we lost this crown of England —

Ay! tho' it were ten Englands!

Gardiner. Right, your Grace. Paget, you are all for this poor life of

ours, And care but little for the life to be.

Paget. I have some time, for curiousness, my lord,

Watch'd children playing at *their* life to be,

And cruel at it, killing helpless flies; Such is our time — all times for aught

I know. *Gardiner.* We kill the heretics that sting the soul —

They, with right reason, flies that prick the flesh.

Paget. They had not reach'd right reason, little children!

They kill'd but for their pleasure and the power

They felt in killing.

Gardiner. A spice of Satan, ha! Why, good! what then? granted! —

we are fallen creatures; Look to your Bible, Paget! we are

fallen. *Paget.* I am but of the laity, my lord bishop,

And may not read your Bible, yet I found

One day a wholesome scripture, 'Little children,

Love one another.'

Gardiner. Did you find a scripture, 'I come not to bring peace but a

sword'? The sword is in her Grace's hand to smite with.

Paget. You stand up here to fight for heresy, You are more than guess'd at as a here-

tic, And on the steep-up track of the true

faith Your lapses are far seen.

Paget. The faultless Gardiner! *Mary.* You brawl beyond the

question; speak, lord legate! *Pole.* Indeed, I cannot follow with

your Grace; Rather would say — the shepherd doth

not kill The sheep that wander from his flock,

but sends His careful dog to bring them to the

fold. Look to the Netherlands, wherein

have been Such holocausts of heresy! to what

end? For yet the faith is not established

there. *Gardiner.* The end's not come.

Pole. No — nor this way will come,

Seeing there lie two ways to every end,

A better and a worse — the worse is here

To persecute, because to persecute Makes a flesh hated, and is further-

more No perfect witness of a perfect faith

In him who persecutes. When men
 are tost
 On tides of strange opinion, and not
 sure
 Of their own selves, they are wroth
 with their own selves,
 And thence with others; then, who
 lights the faggot?
 Not the full faith, no, but the lurking
 doubt.
 Old Rome, that first made martyrs in
 the Church,
 Trembled for her own gods, for these
 were trembling—
 But when did our Rome tremble?
Paget. Did she not
 In Henry's time and Edward's?
Pole. What, my lord!
 The Church on Peter's rock? never!
 I have seen
 A pine in Italy that cast its shadow
 Athwart a cataract; firm stood the
 pine—
 The cataract shook the shadow. To
 my mind,
 The cataract typed the headlong
 plunge and fall
 Of heresy to the pit; the pine was
 Rome.
 You see, my lords,
 It was the shadow of the Church that
 trembled;
 Your church was but the shadow of a
 church,
 Wanting the Papal mitre.
Gardiner (muttering). Here be
 tropes.
Pole. And tropes are good to clothe
 a naked truth,
 And make it look more seemly.
Gardiner. Tropes again!
Pole. You are hard to please.
 Then without tropes, my lord,
 An overmuch severeness, I repeat,
 When faith is wavering makes the
 waverer pass
 Into more settled hatred of the doc-
 trines
 Of those who rule, which hatred by
 and by
 Involves the ruler—thus there springs
 to light
 That Centaur of a monstrous Common-
 weal,
 The traitor-heretic;—then tho' some
 may quail,

Yet others are that dare the stake and
 fire,
 And their strong torment bravely
 borne begets
 An admiration and an indignation,
 And hot desire to imitate; so the
 plague
 Of schism spreads. Were there but
 three or four
 Of these misleaders, yet I would not
 say
 Burn! and we cannot burn whole
 towns; they are many,
 As my Lord Paget says.
Gardiner. Yet, my Lord Cardinal—
Pole. I am your legate; please you
 let me finish.
 Methinks that under our Queen's regi-
 men
 We might go softlier than with crim-
 son rowel
 And streaming lash. When Herod-
 Henry first
 Began to batter at your English
 Church,
 This was the cause, and hence the
 judgment on her.
 She seethed with such adulteries, and
 the lives
 Of many among your churchmen were
 so foul
 That heaven wept and earth blush'd.
 I would advise
 That we should thoroughly cleanse
 the Church within
 Before these bitter statutes be re-
 quicken'd.
 So after that when she once more is
 seen
 White as the light, the spotless bride
 of Christ,
 Like Christ himself on Tabor, possi-
 bly
 The Lutheran may be won to her
 again;
 Till when, my lords, I counsel toler-
 ance.
Gardiner. What, if a mad dog bit
 your hand, my lord,
 Would you not chop the bitten finger
 off,
 Lest your whole body should madden
 with the poison?
 I would not, were I Queen, tolerate
 the heretic,
 No, not an hour. The ruler of a land

Is bounden by his power and place to
see

His people be not poison'd. Tolerate
them!

Why? do they tolerate you? Nay,
many of them

Would burn — have burnt each other;
call they not

The one true faith a loathsome idol-
worship?

Beware, lord legate, of a heavier
crime

Than heresy is itself; beware, I
say, ¹⁴⁰

Lest men accuse you of indifference
To all faiths, all religion; for you
know

Right well that you yourself have
been supposed

Tainted with Lutheranism in Italy.

Pole (angered). But you, my lord,
beyond all supposition,

In clear and open day were congru-
ent

With that vile Cranmer in the accursed
lie

Of good Queen Catharine's divorce —
the spring

Of all those evils that have flow'd
upon us;

For you yourself have truckled to the
tyrant, ¹⁵⁰

And done your best to bastardize our
Queen,

For which God's righteous judgment
fell upon you

In your five years of imprisonment,
my lord,

Under young Edward. Who so bol-
ster'd up

The gross King's headship of the
Church, or more

Denied the Holy Father?

Gardiner. Ha! what! eh?
But you, my lord, a polish'd gentle-
man,

A bookman, flying from the heat and
tussle,

You lived among your vines and
oranges,

In your soft Italy yonder! You were
sent for, ¹⁶⁰

You were appeal'd to, but you still
preferr'd

Your learned leisure. As for what I
did,

I suffer'd and repented. You, lord
legate

And cardinal-deacon, have not now to
learn

That even Saint Peter in his time of
fear

Denied his Master, ay, and thrice, my
lord.

Pole. But not for five-and-twenty
years, my lord.

Gardiner. Ha! good! it seems then
I was summon'd hither

But to be mock'd and baited. Speak,
friend Bonner,

And tell this learned legate he lacks
zeal. ¹⁷⁰

The Church's evil is not as the King's,
Cannot be heal'd by stroking. The
mad bite

Must have the cautery — tell him —
and at once.

What wouldst thou do hadst thou his
power, thou

That layest so long in heretic bonds
with me?

Wouldst thou not burn and blast them
root and branch?

Bonner. Ay, after you, my lord.

Gardiner. Nay, God's passion, be-
fore me! speak!

Bonner. I am on fire until I see
them flame.

Gardiner. Ay, the psalm-singing
weavers, cobblers, scum — ¹⁸⁰

But this most noble prince Plantage-
net,

Our good Queen's cousin — dallying
over-seas

Even when his brother's, nay, his
noble mother's,

Head fell —

Pole. Peace, madman!

Thou stirrest up a grief thou canst not
fathom.

Thou Christian bishop, thou Lord
Chancellor

Of England! no more rein upon thine
anger

Than any child! Thou mak'st me
much ashamed

That I was for a moment wroth at
thee.

Mary. I come for counsel and ye
give me feuds, ¹⁹⁰

Like dogs that, set to watch their
master's gate,

Fall, when the thief is even within the walls,

To worrying one another. My Lord Chancellor,

You have an old trick of offending us ;
And but that you are art and part with us

In purging heresy, well we might, for this

Your violence and much roughness to the legate,

Have shut you from our counsels. Cousin Pole,

You are fresh from brighter lands. Retire with me.

His Highness and myself — so you allow us — ²⁰⁰

Will let you learn in peace and privacy
What power this cooler sun of England hath

In breeding godless vermin. And pray Heaven

That you may see according to our sight !

Come, cousin.

[*Exeunt Queen and Pole, etc.*]

Gardiner. Pole has the Plantagenet face,

But not the force made them our mightiest kings.

Fine eyes — but melancholy, irresolute —

A fine beard, Bonner, a very full fine beard.

But a weak mouth, an indeterminate — ha ?

Bonner. Well, a weak mouth, perchance.

Gardiner. And not like thine
To gorge a heretic whole, roasted or raw. ²¹¹

Bonner. I'd do my best, my Lord ;
but yet the legate

Is here as Pope and Master of the Church,

And if he go not with you —

Gardiner. Tut, Master Bishop,
Our bashful legate, saw'st not how he flush'd ?

Touch him upon his old heretical talk,
He'll burn a diocese to prove his orthodoxy.

And let him call me truckler. In those times,

Thou knowest we had to dodge, or duck, or die ;

I kept my head for use of Holy Church ; ²²⁰

And see you, we shall have to dodge again,

And let the Pope trample our rights, and plunge

His foreign fist into our island Church
To plump the leaner pouch of Italy.

For a time, for a time.

Why ? that these statutes may be put in force,

And that his fan may thoroughly purge his floor.

Bonner. So then you hold the Pope —

Gardiner. I hold the Pope !

What do I hold him ? what do I hold the Pope ?

Come, come, the morsel stuck — this Cardinal's fault — ²³⁰

I have gulpt it down. I am wholly for the Pope,

Utterly and altogether for the Pope,
The Eternal Peter of the changeless chair,

Crown'd slave of slaves, and mitred king of kings,

God upon earth ! what more ? what would you have ?

Hence, let's be gone.

Enter USHER.

Usher. Well that you be not gone,
My lord. The Queen, most wroth at first with you,

Is now content to grant you full forgiveness,

So that you crave full pardon of the legate. ²³⁹

I am sent to fetch you.

Gardiner. Doth Pole yield, sir, ha ?
Did you hear 'em ? were you by ?

Usher. I cannot tell you,
His bearing is so courtly-delicate ;

And yet methinks he falters ; their two Graces

Do so dear-cousin and royal-cousin him,

So press on him the duty which as legate

He owes himself, and with such royal smiles —

Gardiner. Smiles that burn men.
Bonner, it will be carried.

He falters, ha ? 'fore God, we change and change ;

Men now are bow'd and old, the doctors tell you,
 At three-score years; then if we change at all ²⁵⁰
 We needs must do it quickly; it is an age
 Of brief life, and brief purpose, and brief patience,
 As I have shown to-day. I am sorry for it
 If Pole be like to turn. Our old friend Cranmer,
 Your more especial love, hath turn'd so often
 He knows not where he stands, which, if this pass,
 We two shall have to teach him; let 'em look to it,
 Cranmer and Hooper, Ridley and Latimer,
 Rogers and Ferrar, for their time is come,
 Their hour is hard at hand, their 'dies iræ,' ²⁶⁰
 Their 'dies illa,' which will test their sect.
 I feel it but a duty — you will find in it
 Pleasure as well as duty, worthy Bonner, —
 To test their sect. Sir, I attend the Queen
 To crave most humble pardon — of her most
 Royal, Infallible, Papal Legate-cousin.
[Exeunt.]

SCENE V

WOODSTOCK

ELIZABETH, LADY IN WAITING.

Elizabeth. So they have sent poor Courtenay over-sea.

Lady. And banish'd us to Woodstock, and the fields.
 The colors of our Queen are green and white;
 These fields are only green, they make me gape.

Elizabeth. There's white-thorn, girl.

Lady. Ay, for an hour in May.
 But court is always May, buds out in masques,

Breaks into feather'd merriments, and flowers

In silken pageants. Why do they keep us here?

Why still suspect your Grace?

Elizabeth. Hard upon both.

[Writes on the window with a diamond.]

Much suspected, of me ^{1c}

Nothing proven can be.

Quoth Elizabeth, prisoner.

Lady. What hath your Highness written?

Elizabeth. A true rhyme.

Lady. Cut with a diamond; so to last like truth.

Elizabeth. Ay, if truth last.

Lady. But truth, they say, will out;

So it must last. It is not like a word, That comes and goes in uttering.

Elizabeth. Truth, a word! The very Truth and very Word are one.

But truth of story, which I glanced at, girl,

Is like a word that comes from olden days, ²⁰

And passes thro' the peoples; every tongue

Alters it passing, till it spells and speaks

Quite other than at first.

Lady. I do not follow.

Elizabeth. How many names, in the long sweep of time
 That so foreshortens greatness, may but hang

On the chance mention of some fool that once

Brake bread with us, perhaps; and my poor chronicle

Is but of glass. Sir Henry Bedingfield

May split it for a spite.

Lady. God grant it last,
 And witness to your Grace's innocence, ³⁰

Till doomsday melt it!

Elizabeth. Or a second fire,
 Like that which lately crackled underfoot

And in this very chamber, fuse the glass,

And char us back again into the dust

We spring from. Never peacock
against rain
Scream'd as you did for water.

Lady. And I got it.
I woke Sir Henry — and he's true to
you —

I read his honest horror in his eyes.

Elizabeth. Or true to you?

Lady. Sir Henry Bedingfield!
I will have no man true to me, your
Grace,

But one that pares his nails; to me?
the clown!

Elizabeth. Out, girl! you wrong a
noble gentleman.

Lady. For, like his cloak, his man-
ners want the nap
And gloss of court; but of this fire he
says,

Nay swears, it was no wicked wilful-
ness,

Only a natural chance.

Elizabeth. A chance — perchance
One of those wicked wilfuls that men
make,

Nor shame to call it nature. Nay, I
know

They hunt my blood. Save for my
daily range

Among the pleasant fields of Holy
Writ

I might despair. But there hath some
one come;

The house is all in movement. Hence,
and see. [*Exit Lady.*]

MILKMAID (singing without).

Shame upon you, Robin,
Shame upon you now!
Kiss me would you? with my hands
Milking the cow?
Daisies grow again,
Kinecups blow again,
And you came and kiss'd me milking the
cow.

Robin came behind me,
Kiss'd me well, I vow.
Cuff him could I? with my hands
Milking the cow?
Swallows fly again,
Cuckoos cry again,
And you came and kiss'd me milking the
cow.

Come, Robin, Robin,
Come and kiss me now;

Help it can I? with my hands
Milking the cow?
Ringdoves coo again,
All things woo again.
Come behind and kiss me milking the cow!

Elizabeth. Right honest and red-
cheek'd; Robin was violent,
And she was crafty — a sweet vio-
lence,

And a sweet craft. I would I were a
milkmaid,

To sing, love, marry, churn, brew,
bake, and die,

Then have my simple headstone by the
church,

And all things lived and ended hon-
estly.

I could not if I would. I am Harry's
daughter.

Gardiner would have my head. They
are not sweet,

The violence and the craft that do di-
vide

The world of nature; what is weak
must lie.

The lion needs but roar to guard his
young;

The lapwing lies, says 'here' when
they are there.

Threaten the child, 'I'll scourge you
if you did it;'

What weapon hath the child, save his
soft tongue,

To say 'I did not'? and my rod's the
block.

I never lay my head upon the pillow
But that I think, 'Wilt thou lie there
to-morrow?'

How oft the falling axe, that never
fell,

Hath shock'd me back into the day-
light truth

That it may fall to-day! Those damp,
black, dead

Nights in the Tower; dead — with
the fear of death

Too dead even for a death-watch!
Toll of a bell,

Stroke of a clock, the scurrying of a
rat

Affrighted me, and then delighted me,
For there was life — And there was
life in death —

The little murder'd princes, in a pale
light,

Rose hand in hand, and whisper'd,
'Come away!'¹⁰⁰

The civil wars are gone for evermore;
Thou last of all the Tudors, come
away!

With us is peace!' The last? It was
a dream;

I must not dream, not wink, but
watch. She has gone,

Maid Marian to her Robin—by and
by

Both happy! a fox may filch a hen by
night,

And make a morning outcry in the
yard;

But there's no Renard here to 'catch
her tripping.'

Catch me who can; yet, sometime I
have wish'd

That I were caught, and kill'd away
at once¹¹⁰

Out of the flutter. The gray rogue,
Gardiner,

Went on his knees, and pray'd me to
confess

In Wyatt's business, and to cast my-
self

Upon the good Queen's mercy; ay,
when, my lord?

God save the Queen! My jailor—

Enter SIR HENRY BEDINGFIELD.

Bedingfield. One, whose bolts,
That jail you from free life, bar you
from death.

There haunt some Papist ruffians here-
about

Would murder you.

Elizabeth. I thank you heartily, sir,
But I am royal, tho' your prisoner,
And God hath blest or cursed me with
a nose—¹²⁰

Your boots are from the horses.

Bedingfield. Ay, my lady.
When next there comes a missive from
the Queen

It shall be all my study for one hour
To rose and lavender my horsiness,
Before I dare to glance upon your
Grace.

Elizabeth. A missive from the
Queen! last time she wrote,
I had like to have lost my life. It takes
my breath—

O God, sir, do you look upon your
boots,

Are you so small a man? Help me!
what think you,

Is it life or death?

Bedingfield. I thought not on my
boots;¹³⁰

The devil take all boots were ever
made

Since man went barefoot! See, I lay
it here,

For I will come no nearer to your
Grace;

[*Laying down the letter.*
And, whether it brings you bitter news

or sweet,
And God hath given your Grace a nose

or not,
I'll help you, if I may.

Elizabeth. Your pardon, then;
It is the heat and narrowness of the
cage

That makes the captive testy; with
free wing

The world were all one Araby. Leave
me now,

Will you, companion to myself, sir?

Bedingfield. Will I?
With most exceeding willingness, I
will;¹⁴¹

You know I never come till I be call'd.
[*Exit.*

Elizabeth. It lies there folded; is
there venom in it?

A snake—and if I touch it, it may
sting.

Come, come, the worst!

Best wisdom is to know the worst at
once. [Reads.

'It is the King's wish that you
should wed Prince Philibert of Savoy.
You are to come to Court on the in-
stant; and think of this in your com-
ing. 'MARY THE QUEEN.'

Think! I have many thoughts;¹⁵²
I think there may be bird-lime here for
me;

I think they fain would have me from
the realm;

I think the Queen may never bear a
child;

I think that I may be some time the
Queen,

Then, Queen indeed; no foreign prince
or priest

Should fill my throne, myself upon the
steps.

I think I will not marry any one,

Specially not this landless Philibert¹⁶⁰
Of Savoy; but, if Philip menace me,
I think that I will play with Philib-
bert, —

As once the Holy Father did with
mine,
Before my father married my good
mother, —
For fear of Spain.

Enter LADY.

Lady. O Lord! your Grace, your
Grace,
I feel so happy. It seems that we
shall fly
These bald, blank fields, and dance
into the sun
That shines on princes.

Elizabeth. Yet, a moment since,
I wish'd myself the milkmaid singing
here,
To kiss and cuff among the birds and
flowers — ¹⁷⁰

A right rough life and healthful.
Lady. But the wench
Hath her own troubles; she is weep-
ing now;
For the wrong Robin took her at her
word.

Then the cow kick'd, and all her milk
was spilt.

Your Highness such a milkmaid?

Elizabeth. I had kept
My Robins and my cows in sweeter
order

Had I been such.

Lady (stily). And had your Grace a
Robin?

Elizabeth. Come, come, you are chill
here; you want the sun
That shines at court; make ready for
the journey. ¹⁷⁹

Pray God, we 'scape the sunstroke!
Ready at once. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI

LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

LORD PETRE and LORD WILLIAM
HOWARD.

Petre. You cannot see the Queen.
Renard denied her
Even now to me.

Howard. Their Flemish go-between

And all-in-all. I came to thank her
Majesty

For freeing my friend Bagenhall from
the Tower;

A grace to me! Mercy, that herb-of-
grace,

Flowers now but seldom.

Petre. Only now, perhaps,
Because the Queen hath been three
days in tears

For Philip's going — like the wild
hedge-rose

Of a soft winter, possible, not prob-
able,

However you have proven it.

Howard. I must see her.

Enter RENARD.

Renard. My lords, you cannot see
her Majesty. ¹¹

Howard. Why, then the King! for
I would have him bring it
Home to the leisure wisdom of his
Queen,

Before he go, that since these statutes
past,

Gardiner out-Gardiniers Gardiner in his
heat,

Bonner cannot out-Bonner his own
self —

Beast! — but they play with fire as
children do,

And burn the house. I know that
these are breeding

A fierce resolve and fixt heart-hate in
men

Against the King, the Queen, the
Holy Father, ²⁰

The faith itself. Can I not see him?
Renard. Not now.

And in all this, my lord, her Majesty
Is flint of flint; you may strike fire
from her,

Not hope to melt her. I will give
your message.

[*Exeunt Petre and Howard.*]

Enter PHILIP (musing).

Philip. She will not have Prince-
Philibert of Savoy,
I talk'd with her in vain — says she
will live

And die true maid — a goodly crea-
ture too.

Would *she* had been the Queen! yet
she must have him.

She troubles England; that she
breathes in England

Is life and lungs to every rebel
birth 30

That passes out of embryo.

Simon Renard!—

This Howard, whom they fear, what
was he saying?

Renard. What your imperial father
said, my liege,

To deal with heresy gentlier. Gardi-
ner burns,
And Bonner burns; and it would seem
this people

Care more for our brief life in their
wet land

Than yours in happier Spain. I told
my lord

He should not vex her Highness; she
would say

These are the means God works with,
that His church

May flourish.

Philip. Ay, sir, but in statesman-
ship 40

To strike too soon is oft to miss the
blow.

Thou knowest I bade my chaplain,
Castro, preach

Against these burnings.

Renard. And the Emperor
Approved you, and, when last he
wrote, declared

His comfort in your Grace that you
were bland

And affable to men of all estates,
In hope to charm them from their
hate of Spain.

Philip. In hope to crush all heresy
under Spain.

But, Renard, I am sicker staying here
Than any sea could make me passing
hence, 50

Tho' I be ever deadly sick at sea;
So sick am I with biding for this
child.

Is it the fashion in this clime for wo-
men

To go twelve months in bearing of a
child?

The nurses yawn'd, the cradle gaped,
they led

Processions, chanted litanies, clash'd
their bells,

Shot off their lying cannon, and her
priests

Have preach'd, the fools, of this fair
prince to come,

Till, by Saint James, I find myself the
fool.

Why do you lift your eyebrow at me
thus? 60

Renard. I never saw your Highness
moved till now.

Philip. So weary am I of this wet
land of theirs,
And every soul of man that breathes
therein.

Renard. My liege, we must not
drop the mask before

The masquerade is over—

Philip. Have I dropt it?
I have but shown a loathing face to
you,

Who knew it from the first.

Enter MARY.

Mary (aside). With Renard. Still
Parleying with Renard, all the day
with Renard,

And scarce a greeting all the day for
me—

And goes to-morrow. [Exit Mary.]

*Philip (to Renard, who advances to
him).* Well, sir, is there more?

Renard (who has perceived the Queen).
May Simon Renard speak a sin-
gle word? 70

Philip. Ay.

Renard. And be forgiven for it?

Philip. Simon Renard
Knows me too well to speak a single
word

That could not be forgiven.

Renard. Well, my liege,
Your Grace hath a most chaste and
loving wife.

Philip. Why not? The Queen of
Philip should be chaste.

Renard. Ay, but, my lord, you
know what Virgil sings,
Woman is various and most muta-
ble.

Philip. She play the harlot! never.

Renard. No, sire, no,
Not dream'd of by the rabidest gos-
peller. 80

There was a paper thrown into the
palace,

'The King hath wearied of his barren
bride.'

She came upon it, read it, and then
rent it,

With all the rage of one who hates a
truth

He cannot but allow. Sire, I would have you —

What should I say, I cannot pick my words —

Be somewhat less — majestic to your Queen.

Philip. Am I to change my manners, Simon Renard,
Because these islanders are brutal beasts?

Or would you have me turn a sonneteer,

And warble those brief-sighted eyes of hers?

Renard. Brief-sighted tho' they be,
I have seen them, sire,
When you perchance were trifling royally

With some fair dame of court, suddenly fill

With such fierce fire — had it been fire indeed

It would have burnt both speakers.

Philip. Ay, and then?

Renard. Sire, might it not be policy in some matter
Of small importance now and then to cede

A point to her demand?

Philip. Well, I am going.

Renard. For should her love when you are gone, my liege,
Witness these papers, there will not be wanting

Those that will urge her injury — should her love —

And I have known such women more than one —

Veer to the counterpoint, and jealousy Hath in it an alchemic force to fuse
Almost into one metal love and hate, — And she impress her wrongs upon her Council,

And these again upon her Parliament —

We are not loved here, and would be then perhaps

Not so well holpen in our wars with France,

As else we might be — here she comes.

Enter MARY.

Mary. O Philip! Nay, must you go indeed?

Philip. Madam, I must.

Mary. The parting of a husband and a wife

Is like the cleaving of a heart; one half

Will flutter here, one there.

Philip. You say true, Madam.

Mary. The Holy Virgin will not have me yet

Lose the sweet hope that I may bear a prince.

If such a prince were born, and you not here!

Philip. I should be here if such a prince were born.

Mary. But must you go?

Philip. Madam, you know my father,

Retiring into cloistral solitude

To yield the remnant of his years to heaven,

Will shift the yoke and weight of all the world

From off his neck to mine. We meet at Brussels.

But since mine absence will not be for long,

Your Majesty shall go to Dover with me,

And wait my coming back.

Mary. To Dover? no, I am too feeble. I will go to Greenwich,

So you will have me with you; and there watch

All that is gracious in the breath of heaven

Draw with your sails from our poor land and pass

And leave me, Philip, with my prayers for you.

Philip. And doubtless I shall profit by your prayers.

Mary. Methinks that would you tarry one day more —

The news was sudden — I could mould myself

To bear your going better; will you do it?

Philip. Madam, a day may sink or save a realm.

Mary. A day may save a heart from breaking too.

Philip. Well, Simon Renard, shall we stop a day?

Renard. Your Grace's business will not suffer, sire,

For one day more, so far as I can tell.

Philip. Then one day more to please her Majesty.

Mary. The sunshine sweeps across my life again.

O, if I knew you felt this parting, Philip,
As I do!

Philip. By Saint James I do protest,
Upon the faith and honor of a Spaniard,

I am vastly grieved to leave your Majesty.

Simon, is supper ready?

Renard. Ay, my liege,
I saw the covers laying.

Philip. Let us have it.
[*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV

SCENE I. — A ROOM IN THE PALACE

MARY, CARDINAL POLE.

Mary. What have you there?

Pole. So please your Majesty,
A long petition from the foreign exiles
To spare the life of Cranmer. Bishop

Thirlby,
And my Lord Paget and Lord William Howard,

Crave, in the same cause, hearing of your Grace.

Hath he not written himself — infatuated —

To sue you for his life?

Mary. His life? O, no;
Not sued for that — he knows it were in vain.

But so much of the anti-papal leaven
Works in him yet, he hath pray'd me
not to sully

Mine own prerogative, and degrade the realm

By seeking justice at a stranger's hand
Against my natural subject. King and Queen,

To whom he owes his loyalty after God,

Shall these accuse him to a foreign prince?

Death would not grieve him more. I cannot be

True to this realm of England and the Pope

Together, says the heretic.

Pole. And there errs;
As he hath ever err'd thro' vanity. 19
A secular kingdom is but as the body
Lacking a soul; and in itself a beast.
The Holy Father in a secular kingdom
Is as the soul descending out of heaven
Into a body generate.

Mary. Write to him, then.

Pole. I will.

Mary. And sharply, Pole.

Pole. Here come the Cranmerites!
Enter THIRLBY, LORD PAGET, LORD
WILLIAM HOWARD.

Howard. Health to your Grace!
Good morrow, my Lord Cardinal;

We make our humble prayer unto your Grace

That Cranmer may withdraw to foreign parts,

Or into private life within the realm.
In several bills and declarations,

madam, 30
He hath recanted all his heresies.

Paget. Ay, ay; if Bonner have not forged the bills. [*Aside.*]

Mary. Did not More die, and Fisher? he must burn.

Howard. He hath recanted, Madam.

Mary. The better for him.
He burns in purgatory, not in hell.

Howard. Ay, ay, your Grace; but it was never seen

That any one recanting thus at full,
As Cranmer hath, came to the fire on earth.

Mary. It will be seen now, then.

Thirlby. O madam, madam!
I thus implore you, low upon my knees, 40

To reach the hand of mercy to my friend.

I have err'd with him; with him I have recanted.

What human reason is there why my friend

Should meet with lesser mercy than myself?

Mary. My Lord of Ely, this. After a riot

We hang the leaders, let their following go.

Cranmer is head and father of these heresies,

New learning as they call it; yea, may God

Forget me at most need when I forget
Her foul divorce—my sainted mother

—No!—⁵⁰

Howard. Ay, ay, but mighty doctors
doubted there.

The Pope himself waver'd; and more
than one

Row'd in that galley—Gardiner to
wit,

Whom truly I deny not to have been
Your faithful friend and trusty coun-
cillor.

Hath not your Highness ever read his
book,

His tractate upon True Obedience,
Writ by himself and Bonner?

Mary. I will take
Such order with all bad, heretical
books

That none shall hold them in his
house and live,⁶⁰

Henceforward. No, my lord.

Howard. Then never read it.
The truth is here. Your father was
a man

Of such colossal kinghood, yet so
courteous,

Except when wroth, you scarce could
meet his eye

And hold your own; and were he
wroth indeed,

You held it less, or not at all. I say,
Your father had a will that beat men
down;

Your father had a brain that beat
men down—

Pole. Not me, my lord.

Howard. No, for you were not here;
You sit upon this fallen Cranmer's
throne;⁷⁰

And it would more become you, my
Lord Legate,

To join a voice, so potent with her
Highness,

To ours in plea for Cranmer than to
stand

On naked self-assertion.

Mary. All your voices
Are waves on flint. The heretic must
burn.

Howard. Yet once he saved your
Majesty's own life;

Stood out against the King in your
behalf,

At his own peril.

Mary. I know not if he did;

And if he did I care not, my Lord
Howard.

My life is not so happy, no such boon,
That I should spare to take a heretic
priest's,⁸¹

Who saved it or not saved. Why do
you vex me?

Paget. Yet to save Cranmer were
to serve the Church,

Your Majesty's I mean; he is effaced,
Self-blotted out; so wounded in his
honor,

He can but creep down into some dark
hole

Like a hurt beast, and hide himself
and die;

But if you burn him,—well, your
Highness knows

The saying, 'Martyr's blood—seed of
the Church.'

Mary. Of the true Church; but his
is none, nor will be.⁹⁰

You are too politic for me, my Lord
Paget.

And if he have to live so loath'd a
life,

It were more merciful to burn him
now.

Thirby. O, yet relent! O, madam,
if you knew him

As I do, ever gentle, and so gracious,
With all his learning—

Mary. Yet a heretic still.
His learning makes his burning the

more just.

Thirby. So worshipt of all those
that came across him;

The stranger at his hearth, and all his
house—

Mary. His children and his concu-
bine, belike.¹⁰⁰

Thirby. To do him any wrong was
to beget

A kindness from him, for his heart
was rich,

Of such fine mould that if you sow'd
therein

The seed of Hate, it blossom'd Charity.

Pole. 'After his kind it costs him
nothing,' there's

An old world English adage to the
point.

These are but natural graces, my good
bishop,

Which in the Catholic garden are as
flowers,

But on the heretic dunghill only
weeds.

Howard. Such weeds make dung-
hills gracious.

Mary. Enough, my lords.
It is God's will, the Holy Father's will,
And Philip's will, and mine, that he
should burn.

He is pronounced anathema.

Howard. Farewell, madam,
God grant you ampler mercy at your
call

Than you have shown to Cranmer.

[*Exeunt* Lords.]

Pole. After this,
Your Grace will hardly care to over-
look

This same petition of the foreign exiles
For Cranmer's life.

Mary. Make out the writ to-night.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II

OXFORD. CRANMER IN PRISON

Cranmer. Last night I dream'd the
fagots were alight,
And that myself was fasten'd to the
stake,

And found it all a visionary flame,
Cool as the light in old decaying
wood;

And then King Harry look'd from out
a cloud,

And bade me have good courage; and
I heard

An angel cry, 'There is more joy in
Heaven,' —

And after that, the trumpet of the
dead.

[*Trumpets without.*
Why, there are trumpets blowing
now; what is it?

[*Enter* FATHER COLE.]

Cole. Cranmer, I come to question
you again.

Have you remain'd in the true Catho-
lic faith

I left you in?

Cranmer. In the true Catholic
faith,

By Heaven's grace, I am more and
more confirm'd.

Why are the trumpets blowing, Fa-
ther Cole?

Cole. Cranmer, it is decided by the
Council

That you to-day should read your re-
cantation

Before the people in Saint Mary's
Church.

And there be many heretics in the
town,

Who loath you for your late return to
Rome,

And might assail you passing through
the street,

And tear you piecemeal; so you have
a guard.

Cranmer. Or seek to rescue me. I
thank the Council.

Cole. Do you lack any money?

Cranmer. Nay, why should I?
The prison fare is good enough for
me.

Cole. Ay, but to give the poor.

Cranmer. Hand it me, then!

I thank you.

Cole. For a little space, farewell;
Until I see you in Saint Mary's Church.

[*Exit* Cole.]

Cranmer. It is against all prece-
dent to burn

One who recants; they mean to par-
don me.

To give the poor — they give the poor
who die.

Well, burn me or not burn me I am
fixt;

It is but a communion, not a mass,

A holy supper, not a sacrifice;

No man can make his Maker — Villa
Garcia.

[*Enter* VILLA GARCIA.]

Villa Garcia. Pray you write out
this paper for me, Cranmer.

Cranmer. Have I not writ enough
to satisfy you?

Villa Garcia. It is the last.

Cranmer. Give it me, then.

[*He writes.*]

Villa Garcia. Now sign.

Cranmer. I have sign'd enough,
and I will sign no more.

Villa Garcia. It is no more than
what you have sign'd already,

The public form thereof.

Cranmer. It may be so;
I sign it with my presence, if I read it.

Villa Garcia. But this is idle of
you. Well, sir, well,

You are to beg the people to pray for you ;

Exhort them to a pure and virtuous life ;

Declare the Queen's right to the throne ; confess

Your faith before all hearers ; and retract

That Eucharistic doctrine in your book.

Will you not sign it now ?

Cranmer. No, Villa Garcia, I sign no more. Will they have mercy on me ?

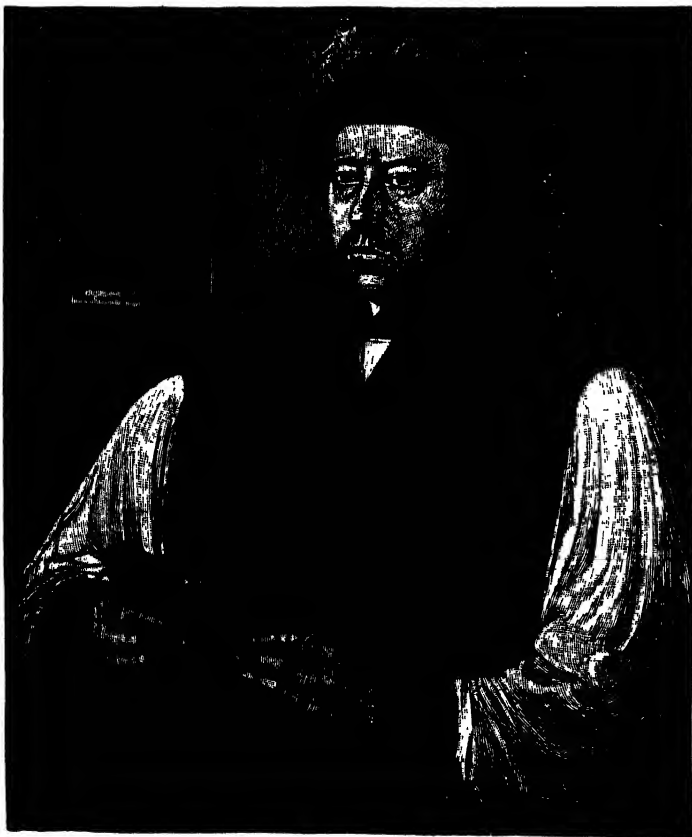
Villa Garcia. Have you good hopes of mercy ! So, farewell.

[*Exit.*

Cranmer. Good hopes, not theirs, have I that I am fixt, ⁵¹
Fixt beyond fall ; however, in strange hours,

After the long brain-dazing colloquies,
And thousand-times recurring argument

Of those two friars ever in my prison,
When left alone in my despondency,
Without a friend, a book, my faith would seem



CRANMER

Dead or half-drown'd, or else swam
heavily
Against the huge corruptions of the
Church,
Monsters of mistradition, old enough
To scare me into dreaming. 'What
am I, ⁶¹
Cranmer, against whole ages?' was
it so,
Or am I slandering my most inward
friend,
To veil the fault of my most outward
foe —
The soft and tremulous coward in the
flesh ?
O higher, holier, earlier, purer church,
I have found thee and not leave thee
any more.
It is but a communion, not a mass —
No sacrifice, but a life-giving feast!
(Writes.) So, so; this will I say —
thus will I pray. ⁷⁰

[Puts up the paper.]

Enter BONNER.

Bonner. Good day, old friend;
what, you look somewhat worn;
And yet it is a day to test your health
Even at the best. I scarce have spoken
with you
Since when? — your degradation. At
your trial
Never stood up a bolder man than
you;
You would not cap the Pope's com-
missioner —
Your learning, and your stoutness,
and your heresy,
Dumbfounded half of us. So, after
that,
We had to dis-archbishop and unlord,
And make you simple Cranmer once
again.
The common barber clipt your hair,
and I
Scraped from your finger-points the
holy oil;
And worse than all, you had to kneel
to me;
Which was not pleasant for you, Mas-
ter Cranmer.
Now you, that would not recognize
the Pope,
And you, that would not own the
Real Presence,
Have found a real presence in the
stake,

Which frights you back into the an-
cient faith;

And so you have recanted to the
Pope.

How are the mighty fallen, Master
Cranmer! ⁹⁰

Cranmer. You have been more
fierce against the Pope than I;
But why fling back the stone he strikes
me with? [Aside.]

O Bonner, if I ever did you kindness —
Power hath been given you to try
faith by fire —

Pray you, remembering how your-
self have changed,

Be somewhat pitiful, after I have
gone,

To the poor flock — to women and to
children —

That when I was archbishop held with
me.

Bonner. Ay — gentle as they call
you — live or die!

Pitiful to this pitiful heresy? ¹⁰⁰
I must obey the Queen and Council,
man.

Win thro' this day with honor to your-
self,

And I'll say something for you — so
— good-bye. [Exit.]

Cranmer. This hard coarse man of
old hath crouch'd to me
Till I myself was half ashamed for
him.

Enter THIRLBY.

Weep not, good Thirlby.

Thirlby. O, my lord, my lord!
My heart is no such block as Bonner's
is:

Who would not weep?

Cranmer. Why do you so my-lord
me,

Who am disgraced?

Thirlby. On earth; but saved in
heaven

By your recanting.

Cranmer. Will they burn me,
Thirlby? ¹¹⁰

Thirlby. Alas! they will! these
burnings will not help

The purpose of the faith; but my
poor voice

Against them is a whisper to the roar
Of a spring-tide.

Cranmer. And they will surely
burn me?

Thirlby. Ay ; and besides will have you in the church
Repeat your recantation in the ears
Of all men, to the saving of their souls,
Before your execution. May God
help you
Thro' that hard hour !

Cranmer. And may God bless you,
Thirlby !
Well, they shall hear my recantation
there. [*Exit Thirlby.*]

Disgrac'd, dishonor'd ! — not by them,
indeed,
By mine own self — by mine own
hand !

O thin-skinn'd hand and jutting veins,
't was you
That sign'd the burning of poor Joan
of Kent ;

But then she was a witch. You have
written much,
But you were never raised to plead
for Frith,
Whose dogmas I have reach'd. He
was deliver'd

To the secular arm to burn ; and three
was Lambert ;

Who can foresee himself ? truly these
burnings,

As Thirlby says, are profitless to the
burners, ¹³⁰

And help the other side. You shall
burn too,

Burn first when I am burnt.
Fire — inch by inch to die in agony !
Latimer

Had a brief end — not Ridley. Hooper
burn'd

Three-quarters of an hour. Will my
fagots

Be wet as his were ? It is a day of
rain.

I will not muse upon it.
My fancy takes the burner's part, and
makes

The fire seem even crueller than it
is.

No, I not doubt that God will give me
strength, ¹⁴⁰

Albeit I have denied Him.

Enter SOTO and VILLA GARCIA.
Villa Garcia. We are ready

To take you to Saint Mary's, Master
Cranmer.

Cranmer. And I. Lead on ; ye loose
me from my bonds. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

COLE in the Pulpit, LORD WILLIAMS OF THAME presiding. LORD WILLIAM HOWARD, LORD PAGET, and others. CRANMER enters between SOTO and VILLA GARCIA, and the whole Choir strike up, 'Nunc Dimittis.' CRANMER is set upon a Scaffold before the people.

Cole. Behold him —

[*A pause : people in the foreground.*]
People. O, unhappy sight !

First Protestant. See how the tears
run down his fatherly face.

Second Protestant. James, didst thou
ever see a carrion crow
Stand watching a sick beast before he
dies ?

First Protestant. Him perch'd up
there ? I wish some thunderbolt
Would make this Cole a cinder, pulpit
and all.

Cole. Behold him, brethren ; he hath
cause to weep ! —

So have we all. Weep with him if ye
will,

Yet — ¹⁰
It is expedient for one man to die,

Yea, for the people, lest the people
die.

Yet wherefore should he die that hath
return'd

To the one Catholic Universal Church,
Repentant of his errors ?

Protestant Murmurs. Ay, tell us
that.

Cole. Those of the wrong side will
despise the man,
Deeming him one that thro' the fear
of death

Gave up his cause, except he seal his
faith

In sight of all with flaming martyr-
dom.

Cranmer. Ay. ²⁰

Cole. Ye hear him, and albeit there
may seem

According to the canons pardon due
To him that so repents, yet are there

causes
Wherefore our Queen and Council at
this time

Adjudge him to the death. He hath
been a traitor,

A shaker and confounder of the realm ;
And when the King's divorce was
sued at Rome,

He here, this heretic metropolitan,
As if he had been the Holy Father, sat
And judged it. Did I call him here-
tic ?

A huge heresiarch ? never was it
known

That any man so writing, preaching
so,

So poisoning the Church, so long con-
tinuing,

Hath found his pardon ; therefore he
must die,

For warning and example.

Other reasons
There be for this man's ending, which
our Queen

And Council at this present deem it
not

Expedient to be known.

Protestant Murmurs. I warrant
you.

Cole. Take therefore, all, example
by this man,

For if our Holy Queen not pardon
him,

Much less shall others in like cause
escape,

That all of you, the highest as the
lowest,

May learn there is no power against
the Lord.

There stands a man, once of so high
degree,

Chief prelate of our Church, arch-
bishop, first

In Council, second person in the
realm,

Friend for so long time of a mighty
King ;

And now ye see downfallen and de-
based

From councillor to caitiff — fallen so
low,

The leprous flutterings of the byway,
scum

And offal of the city, would not
change

Estates with him ; in brief, so miser-
able

There is no hope of better left for him,
No place for worse.

Yet, Cranmer, be thou glad.
This is the work of God. He is glo-
rified

In thy conversation ; lo ! thou art re-
claim'd ;

He brings thee home ; nor fear but
that to-day

Thou shalt receive the penitent thief's
award,

And be with Christ the Lord in Para-
dise.

Remember how God made the fierce
fire seem

To those three children like a pleasant
dew.

Remember, too,
The triumph of Saint Andrew on his
cross,

The patience of Saint Lawrence in the
fire.

Thus, if thou call on God and all the
Saints

God will beat down the fury of the
flame,

Or give thee saintly strength to un-
dergo.

And for thy soul shall masses here be
sung

By every priest in Oxford. Pray for
him.

Cranmer. Ay, one and all, dear
brothers, pray for me ;

Pray with one breath, one heart, one
soul for me.

Cole. And now, lest any one among
you doubt

The man's conversation and remorse
of heart,

Yourselves shall hear him speak.
Speak, Master Cranmer,

Fulfil your promise made me, and pro-
claim

Your true undoubted faith, that all
may hear.

Cranmer. And that I will. O God,
Father of Heaven !

O Son of God, Redeemer of the world !
O Holy Ghost, proceeding from them

both !

Three persons and one God, have
mercy on me,

Most miserable sinner, wretched man !
I have offended against heaven and

earth
More grievously than any tongue can
tell.

Then whither should I flee for any help ?

I am ashamed to lift my eyes to heaven,

And I can find no refuge upon earth.
Shall I despair then ?— God forbid !
O God,

For Thou art merciful, refusing none
That come to Thee for succor, unto
Thee,

Therefore, I come ; humble myself to
Thee ;

Saying, O Lord God, although my
sins be great,

For Thy great mercy have mercy ! O
God the Son,

Not for slight faults alone, when Thou
becamest

Man in the flesh, was the great mystery wrought ;

O God the Father, not for little sins
Didst Thou yield up Thy Son to
human death !

But for the greatest sin that can be
sinn'd,

Yea, even such as mine, incalculable,
Unpardonable, — sin against the light,
The truth of God, which I had proven
and known.

Thy mercy must be greater than all
sin.

Forgive me, Father, for no merit of
mine,

But that Thy name by man be glorified,

And Thy most blessed Son's, who died
for man.

Good people, every man at time of
death

Would fain set forth some saying that
may live

After his death and better humankind ;
For death gives life's last word a
power to live,

And, like the stone-cut epitaph, remain

After the vanish'd voice, and speak to
men.

God grant me grace to glorify my
God !

And first I say it is a grievous case,
Many so dote upon this bubble world,
Whose colors in a moment break and
fly,

They care for nothing else. What
saith Saint John ?

'Love of this world is hatred against
God.'

Again, I pray you all that, next to
God,

You do un murmuringly and willingly
Obey your King and Queen, and not
for dread

Of these alone, but from the fear of
Him

Whose ministers they be to govern you.
Thirdly, I pray you all to live together

Like brethren ; yet what hatred Christian men

Bear to each other, seeming not as
brethren,

But mortal foes ! But do you good to
all

As much as in you lieth. Hurt no man
more

Than you would harm your loving
natural brother

Of the same roof, same breast. If any
do,

Albeit he think himself at home with
God,

Of this be sure, he is whole worlds
away.

Protestant Murmurs. What sort of
brothers then be those that lust
To burn each other ?

Williams. Peace among you, there !
Cranmer. Fourthly, to those that

own exceeding wealth,
Remember that sore saying spoken
once

By Him that was the truth, 'How hard
it is

For the rich man to enter into heaven !'
Let all rich men remember that hard

word.

I have not time for more ; if ever, now
Let them flow forth in charity, seeing
now

The poor so many, and all food so
dear.

Long have I lain in prison, yet have
heard

Of all their wretchedness. Give to the
poor,

Ye give to God. He is with us in the
poor.

And now, and forasmuch as I have
come

To the last end of life, and thereupon
Hangs all my past, and all my life to
be,

Either to live with Christ in heaven
with joy,
Or to be still in pain with devils in
hell;

And, seeing in a moment I shall find
Heaven or else hell ready to swallow
me,

[*Pointing upwards.*
150
[*Pointing downwards.*
I shall declare to you my very faith
Without all color.

Cole. Hear him, my good brethren.

Cranmer. I do believe in God, Father of all;

In every article of the Catholic faith,
And every syllable taught us by our
Lord,

His prophets, and apostles, in the
Testaments,
Both Old and New.

Cole. Be plainer, Master Cranmer.

Cranmer. And now I come to the
great cause that weighs
Upon my conscience more than any-
thing

Or said or done in all my life by me;
For there be writings I have set abroad
Against the truth I knew within my
heart,

Written for fear of death, to save my
life,

If that might be; the papers by my
hand

Sign'd since my degradation — by this
hand

[*Holding out his right hand.*
Written and sign'd — I here renounce
them all;

And, since my hand offended, having
written

Against my heart, my hand shall first
be burnt,

So I may come to the fire.

[*Dead silence.*
PROTESTANT MURMURS.

First Protestant. I knew it would
be so.

Second Protestant. Our prayers are
heard!

Third Protestant. God bless him!

CATHOLIC MURMURS.
Out upon him! out upon him!
Liar! dissembler! traitor! to the fire!

Williams (raising his voice). You
know that you recanted all you
said

Touching the sacrament in that same
book

You wrote against my Lord of Win-
chester;

Dissemble not; play the plain Chris-
tian man.

Cranmer. Alas, my lord,
I have been a man loved plainness all
my life;

I *did* dissemble, but the hour has come
For utter truth and plainness; where-
fore, I say,

I hold by all I wrote within that book.
Moreover,

As for the Pope, I count him Anti-
christ,

With all his devil's doctrines, and re-
fuse,

Reject him, and abhor him. I have
said.

[*Cries on all sides.* 'Pull him down!
Away with him!'

Cole. Ay, stop the heretic's mouth!
Hale him away!

Williams. Harm him not, harm him
not! have him to the fire!

[*Cranmer goes out between Two
Friars, smiling; hands are
reached to him from the crowd.*
Lord William Howard and Lord
Paget are left alone in the
church.

Paget. The nave and aisles all empty
as a fool's jest!

No, here's Lord William Howard.

What, my lord,

You have not gone to see the burning?
Howard. Fie!

To stand at ease, and stare as at a
show,

And watch a good man burn. Never
again.

I saw the deaths of Latimer and Rid-
ley.

Moreover, tho' a Catholic, I would not,
For the pure honor of our common
nature,

Hear what I might — another recanta-
tion

Of Cranmer at the stake.

Paget. You'd not hear that.
He pass'd out smiling, and he walk'd
upright;

His eye was like a soldier's, whom the
general

He looks to and he leans on as his God,

Hath rated for some backwardness and
bidden him

Charge one against a thousand, and
the man

Hurls his soil'd life against the pikes
and dies.

Howard. Yet that he might not after
all those papers
Of recantation yield again, who
knows?

Paget. Papers of recantation! Think
you then
That Cranmer read all papers that he
sign'd?

Or sign'd all those they tell us that he
sign'd?

Nay, I trow not; and you shall see,
my Lord, ²¹⁰

That howsoever hero-like the man
Dies in the fire, this Bonner or an-
other

Will in some lying fashion misreport
His ending to the glory of their church.
And you saw Latimer and Ridley die?
Latimer was eighty, was he not? his
best

Of life was over then.

Howard. His eighty years
Look'd somewhat crooked on him in
his frieze;

But after they had stript him to his
shroud,

He stood upright, a lad of twenty-
one, ²²⁰

And gather'd with his hands the start-
ing flame,

And wash'd his hands and all his face
therein,

Until the powder suddenly blew him
dead.

Ridley was longer burning; but he
died

As manfully and boldly, and, 'fore
God,

I know them heretics, but right Eng-
lish ones.

If ever, as heaven grant, we clash with
Spain,

Our Ridley-soldiers and our Latimer-
sailors

Will teach her something.

Paget. Your mild legate Pole
Will tell you that the devil helpt them
thro' it. ²³⁰

[A murmur of the Crowd in the dis-
tance.

Hark, how those Roman wolf-dogs
howl and bay him!

Howard. Might it not be the other
side rejoicing

In his brave end?

Paget. They are too crush'd, too
broken,

They can but weep in silence.

Howard. Ay, ay, Paget,
They have brought it in large measure
on themselves.

Have I not heard them mock the
blessed Host

In songs so lewd the beast might roar
his claim

To being in God's image, more than
they?

Have I not seen the gamekeeper, the
groom,

Gardener, and huntsman, in the par-
son's place, ²⁴⁰

The parson from his own spire swung
out dead,

And Ignorance crying in the streets,
and all men

Regarding her? I say they have drawn
the fire

On their own heads; yet, Paget, I do
hold

The Catholic, if he have the greater
right,

Hath been the crueller.

Paget. Action and reaction,
The miserable see-saw of our child-
world,

Make us despise it at odd hours, my
lord.

Heaven help that this reaction not re-
act ²⁴⁹

Yet fiercelier under Queen Elizabeth
So that she come to rule us.

Howard. The world's mad.

Paget. My Lord, the world is like a
drunken man,

Who cannot move straight to his end,
but reels

Now to the right, then as far to the
left,

Push'd by the crowd beside — and un-
derfoot

An earthquake; for since Henry for a
doubt —

Which a young lust had clapt upon
the back,

Crying, 'Forward!' — set our old
church rocking, men

Have hardly known what to believe,
or whether

They should believe in anything; the
currents ²⁶⁰

So shift and change, they see not how
they are borne,

Nor whither. I conclude the King a
beast;

Verily a lion if you will — the world
A most obedient beast and fool — my-
self

Half beast and fool as appertaining
to it;

Altho' your lordship hath as little of
each

Cleaving to your original Adam-clay
As may be consonant with mortal-
ity.

Howard. We talk and Cranmer
suffers.

The kindest man I ever knew; see,
see, ²⁷⁰

I speak of him in the past. Unhappy
land!

Hard-natured Queen, half-Spanish in
herself,

And grafted on the hard-grain'd stock
of Spain —

Her life, since Philip left her, and she
lost

Her fierce desire of bearing him a
child,

Hath, like a brief and bitter winter's
day,

Gone narrowing down and darkening
to a close.

There will be more conspiracies, I
fear.

Paget. Ay, ay, beware of France.

Howard. O Paget, Paget!
I have seen heretics of the poorer
sort, ²⁸⁰

Expectant of the rack from day to
day,

To whom the fire were welcome, lying
chain'd

In breathless dungeons over steaming
sewers,

Fed with rank bread that crawl'd
upon the tongue,

And putrid water, every drop a
worm,

Until they died of rotted limbs; and
then

Cast on the dunghill naked, and be-
come

Hideously alive again from head to
heel,

Made even the carrion-nosing mongrel
vomit

With hate and horror.

Paget. Nay, you sicken *me*
To hear you.

Howard. Fancy-sick; these things
are done, ²⁹¹

Done right against the promise of this
Queen

Twice given.

Paget. No faith with heretics, my
lord!

Hist! there be two old gossips — gos-
pellers,

I take it; stand behind the pillar here;
I warrant you they talk about the
burning.

Enter TWO OLD WOMEN. JOAN, and
after her TIB.

Joan. Why, it be Tib!

Tib. I cum behind tha, gall, and
couldn't make tha hear. Eh, the
wind and the wet! What a day,
what a day! nigh upo' judgment
day loike. Pwoaps be pretty things.
Joan, but they wunt set i' the Lord's
cheer o' that day. ³⁰⁴

Joan. I must set down myself, Tib;
it be a var waay vor my owld legs up
vro' Islip. Eh, my rheumatizy be
that bad howiver be I to win to the
burnin'?

Tib. I should saay 't wur ower by
now. I'd ha' been here avore, but
Dumble wur blow'd wi' the wind,
and Dumble's the best milcher in
Islip. ³¹⁴

Joan. Our Daisy's as good 'z her.

Tib. Noa, Joan.

Joan. Our Daisy's butter 's as good
'z hern.

Tib. Noa, Joan.

Joan. Our Daisy's cheeses be better.

Tib. Noa, Joan.

Joan. Eh, then ha' thy waay wi'
me, Tib; ez thou hast wi' thy owld
man. ³²⁴

Tib. Ay, Joan, and my owld man
wur up and awaay betimes wi' dree
hard eggs for a good plect at the
burnin'; and barrin' the wet, Hodge
'ud ha' been a-harrowin' o' white
peasen i' the outfield — and barrin' the
wind, Dumble wur blow'd wi' the

wind, so 'z we was forced to stick her, but we fetched her round at last. Thank the Lord therefore. Dumble's the best milcher in Islip.

Joan. Thou's thy way wi' man and beast, Tib. I wonder at tha, it beats me! Eh, but I do know ez Pwoaps and vires be bad things; tell 'ee now, I heerd summatt as summun towld summun o' owld Bishop Gardiner's end; there wur an owld lord a-cum to dine wi' un, and a wur so owld a couldn't bide vor his dinner, but a had to bide howsomiver, vor 'I wunt dine,' says my Lord Bishop, says he, 'not till I hears ez Latimer and Ridley be a-vire;' and so they bided on and on till vour o' the clock, till his man cum in post vro' here, and tells un ez the vire has tuk holt. 'Now,' says the Bishop, says he, 'we'll gwo to dinner;' and the owld lord fell to's meat wi' a will, God bless un! but Gardiner wur struck down like by the hand o' God avore a could taste a mossel, and a set un all a-vire, so 'z the tongue on un cum a-lolluping out o' 'is mouth as black as a rat. Thank the Lord therefore!

Paget. The fools!

Tib. Ay, Joan; and Quen Mary gwoes on a-burnin' and a-burnin', to get her baaby born; but all her burnin's 'ill never burn out the hypocrisy that makes the water in her. There's nought but the vire of God's hell ez can burn out that.

Joan. Thank the Lord therefore!

Paget. The fools!

Tib. A-burnin', and a-burnin', and a-makin' o' volk madder and madder; but tek thou my word vor 't, Joan, — and I bean't wrong not twice i' ten year — the burnin' o' the owld archbishop'll burn the Pwoap out o' this 'ere land vor iver and iver.

Howard. Out of the church, you brace of cursed crones, Or I will have you duck'd! (*Women hurry out.*) Said I not right? For how should reverend prelate or throned prince
Brook for an hour such brute malignity?

Ah, what an acrid wine has Luther brew'd!

Paget. Pooh, pooh, my lord! poor garrulous country-wives. Buy you their cheeses, and they'll side with you;

You cannot judge the liquor from the lees.

Howard. I think that in some sort we may. But see,

Enter PETERS.

Peters, my gentleman, an honest Catholic,

Who follow'd with the crowd to Cranmer's fire.

One that would neither misreport nor lie,

Not to gain paradise; no, nor if the Pope

Charged him to do it — he is white as death.

Peters, how pale you look! you bring the smoke

Of Cranmer's burning with you.

Peters. Twice or thrice The smoke of Cranmer's burning wrapt me round.

Howard. Peters, you know me Catholic, but English.

Did he die bravely? Tell me that, or leave

All else untold.

Peters. My lord, he died most bravely.

Howard. Then tell me all.

Paget. Ay, Master Peters, tell us.

Peters. You saw him how he past among the crowd;

And ever as he walk'd the Spanish friars

Still plied him with entreaty and reproach;

But Cranmer, as the helmsman at the helm

Steers, ever looking to the happy haven

Where he shall rest at night, moved to his death;

And I could see that many silent hands

Came from the crowd and met his own; and thus,

When we had come where Ridley burnt with Latimer,

He, with a cheerful smile, as one whose mind

Is all made up, in haste put off the rags

They had mock'd his misery with,
 and all in white, ⁴¹⁰
 His long white beard, which he had
 never shaven
 Since Henry's death, down-sweeping
 to the chain
 Wherewith they bound him to the
 stake, he stood
 More like an ancient father of the
 Church
 Than heretic of these times; and still
 the friars
 Plied him, but Cranmer only shook
 his head,
 Or answer'd them in smiling negatives;
 Whereat Lord Williams gave a sudden
 cry:—
 'Make short! make short!' and so
 they lit the wood.
 Then Cranmer lifted his left hand to
 heaven, ⁴²⁰
 And thrust his right into the bitter
 flame;
 And crying, in his deep voice, more
 than once,
 'This hath offended—this unworthy
 hand!'
 So held it till it all was burn'd, be-
 fore
 The flame had reach'd his body; I
 stood near—
 Mark'd him—he never uttered moan
 of pain.
 He never stirr'd or writhed, but, like
 a statue,
 Unmoving in the greatness of the
 flame,
 Gave up the ghost; and so past mar-
 tyr-like—
 Martyr I may not call him—past—
 but whither? ⁴³⁰
Paget. To purgatory, man, to pur-
 gatory.
Peters. Nay, but, my lord, he de-
 nied purgatory.
Paget. Why then to heaven, and
 God ha' mercy on him!
Howard. Paget, despite his fearful
 heresies,
 I loved the man, and needs must
 moan for him;
 O Cranmer!
Paget. But your moan is useless
 now.
 Come out, my lord, it is a world of
 fools. [*Exeunt.*

ACT V

SCENE I.—LONDON. HALL IN THE
PALACE

QUEEN, SIR NICHOLAS HEATH.

Heath. Madam,
 I do assure you that it must be look'd
 to.
 Calais is but ill-garrison'd, in Guisnes
 Are scarce two hundred men, and the
 French fleet
 Rule in the narrow seas. It must be
 look'd to,
 If war should fall between yourself
 and France;
 Or you will lose your Calais.

Mary. It shall be look'd to;
 I wish you a good morning, good Sir
 Nicholas.
 Here is the King. [*Exit Heath.*

[*Enter PHILIP.*
Philip. Sir Nicholas tells you true,
 And you must look to Calais when I
 go. ¹⁰
Mary. Go? must you go, indeed
 —again—so soon?
 Why, nature's licensed vagabond, the
 swallow,
 That might live always in the sun's
 warm heart,
 Stays longer here in our poor North
 than you—
 Knows where he nested—ever comes
 again.

Philip. And, Madam, so shall I.
Mary. O, will you? will you?
 I am faint with fear that you will
 come no more.

Philip. Ay, ay; but many voices
 call me hence.

Mary. Voices—I hear unhappy
 rumors—nay,
 I say not, I believe. What voices
 call you ²⁰
 Dearer than mine that should be dear-
 est to you?
 Alas, my lord! what voices and how
 many?

Philip. The voices of Castile and
 Aragon,
 Granada, Naples, Sicily, and Milan,
 The voices of France-Comté, and the
 Netherlands,
 The voices of Peru and Mexico,

Tunis, and Oran, and the Philippines,
And all the fair spice-islands of the
East.

Mary (admiringly). You are the
mightiest monarch upon earth,
I but a little Queen; and so, indeed, 30
Need you the more.

Philip. A little Queen! but when
I came to wed your majesty, Lord
Howard,
Sending an insolent shot that dash'd
the seas
Upon us, made us lower our kingly
flag
To yours of England.

Mary. Howard is all English!
There is no king, not were he ten
times king,
Ten times our husband, but must
lower his flag
To that of England in the seas of
England.

Philip. Is that your answer?

Mary. Being Queen of England,
I have none other.

Philip. So.

Mary. But wherefore not
Helm the huge vessel of your State,
my liege, 41
Here by the side of her who loves you
most?

Philip. No, madam, no! a candle
in the sun
Is all but smoke—a star beside the
moon
Is all but lost; your people will not
crown me—
Your people are as cheerless as your
clime,
Hate me and mine; witness the brawls,
the gibbets.

Here swings a Spaniard—there an
Englishman;
The peoples are unlike as their com-
plexion;

Yet will I be your swallow and re-
turn — 50
But now I cannot bide.

Mary. Not to help me?
They hate me also for my love to you,
My Philip; and these judgments on
the land —

Harvestless autumns, horrible agues,
plague —

Philip. The blood and sweat of
heretics at the stake

Is God's best dew upon the barren field.
Burn more!

Mary. I will, I will; and you will
stay?

Philip. Have I not said? Madam,
I came to sue
Your Council and yourself to declare
war.

Mary. Sir, there are many English
in your ranks 60
To help your battle.

Philip. So far, good. I say
I came to sue your Council and your-
self

To declare war against the King of
France.

Mary. Not to see me?

Philip. Ay, madam, to see you.
Unalterably and pesteringly fond!

[*Aside.*
But soon or late you must have war
with France;

King Henry warms your traitors at
his hearth.

Carew is there, and Thomas Stafford
there.

Courtenay, belike —

Mary. A fool and featherhead!

Philip. Ay, but they use his name.
In brief, this Henry 70
Stirs up your land against you to the
intent

That you may lose your English heri-
tage.

And then, your Scottish namesake
marrying

The Dauphin, he would weld France,
England, Scotland,
Into one sword to hack at Spain and
me.

Mary. And yet the Pope is now
colleagu'd with France;

You make your wars upon him down
in Italy —

Philip, can that be well?

Philip. Content you, madam;
You must abide my judgment, and
my father's,

Who deems it a most just and holy
war. 80

The Pope would cast the Spaniard out
of Naples;

He calls us worse than Jews, Moors,
Saracens.

The Pope has push'd his horns beyond
his mitre —

Beyond his province. Now,
Duke Alva will but touch him on the
horns,
And he withdraws; and of his holy
head—
For Alva is true son of the true
Church—
No hair is harm'd. Will you not help
me here?

Mary. Alas! the Council will not
hear of war.
They say your wars are not the wars
of England.
They will not lay more taxes on a
land
So hunger-nipt and wretched; and
you know
The crown is poor. We have given
the church-lands back.
The nobles would not; nay, they
clapt their hands
Upon their swords when ask'd; and
therefore God
Is hard upon the people. What's to
be done?
Sir, I will move them in your cause
again,
And we will raise us loans and sub-
sidies
Among the merchants; and Sir
Thomas Gresham
Will aid us. There is Antwerp and
the Jews.

Philip. Madam, my thanks.

Mary. And you will stay your
going?

Philip. And further to discourage
and lay lame
The plots of France, altho' you love
her not,
You must proclaim Elizabeth your
heir.
She stands between you and the Queen
of Scots.
Mary. The Queen of Scots at least
is Catholic.
Philip. Ay, madam, Catholic; but
I will not have
The King of France the King of Eng-
land too.

Mary. But she's a heretic, and,
when I am gone,
Brings the new learning back.

Philip. It must be done.
You must proclaim Elizabeth your
heir.

Mary. Then it is done; but you
will stay your going
Somewhat beyond your settled pur-
pose?

Philip. No!

Mary. What, not one day?

Philip. You beat upon the rock.

Mary. And I am broken there.

Philip. Is this a place
To wait in, madam? what! a public
hall?

Go in, I pray you.

Mary. Do not seem so changed.
Say go; but only say it lovingly.

Philip. You do mistake. I am not
one to change.

I never loved you more.

Mary. Sire, I obey you.
Come quickly.

Philip. Ay. [*Exit Mary.*]

Enter COUNT DE FERIA.

Feria (aside). The Queen in tears!

Philip. Feria!

Hast thou not mark'd—come closer
to mine ear—

How doubly aged this Queen of ours
hath grown

Since she lost hope of bearing us a
child?

Feria. Sire, if your Grace hath
mark'd it, so have I.

Philip. Hast thou not likewise
mark'd Elizabeth,

How fair and royal—like a queen,
indeed?

Feria. Allow me the same answer
as before—

That if your Grace hath mark'd her,
so have I.

Philip. Good, now; methinks my
Queen is like enough

To leave me by and by.

Feria. To leave you, sire?

Philip. I mean not like to live.
Elizabeth—

To Philibert of Savoy, as you know,
We meant to wed her; but I am not
sure

She will not serve me better—so my
Queen

Would leave me—as—my wife.

Feria. Sire, even so.

Philip. She will not have Prince
Philibert of Savoy.

Feria. No, sire.

Philip. I have to pray you, some odd time,
To sound the Princess carelessly on this;
Not as from me, but as your phantasy;
And tell me how she takes it.

Feria. Sire, I will.

Philip. I am not certain but that Phillibert
Shall be the man; and I shall urge his suit
Upon the Queen, because I am not certain.

You understand, *Feria*.

Feria. Sire, I do.

Philip. And if you be not secret in this matter,
You understand me there, too?

Feria. Sire, I do.

Philip. You must be sweet and supple, like a Frenchman:
She is none of those who loathe the honeycomb.

[*Exit Feria.*]

Enter RENARD.

Renard. My liege, I bring you goodly tidings.

Philip. Well? 150

Renard. There *will* be war with France, at last, my liege;
Sir Thomas Stafford, a bull-headed ass,
Sailing from France, with thirty Englishmen,
Hath taken Scarboro' Castle, north of York;
Proclaims himself protector, and affirms
The Queen has forfeited her right to reign
By marriage with an alien — other things

As idle; a weak Wyatt! Little doubt
This buzz will soon be silenced; but the Council —

I have talk'd with some already — are for war. 160

This is the fifth conspiracy hatch'd in France;

They show their teeth upon it; and your Grace,

So you will take advice of mine, should stay

Yet for a while, to shape and guide the event.

Philip. Good! Renard, I will stay then.

Renard. Also, sire,
Might I not say — to please your wife, the Queen?

Philip. Ay, Renard, if you care to put it so.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II

A ROOM IN THE PALACE

MARY, *sitting: a rose in her hand.*

LADY CLARENCE. ALICE *in the background.*

Mary. Look! I have play'd with this poor rose so long
I have broken off the head.

Lady Clarence. Your Grace hath been
More merciful to many a rebel head
That should have fallen, and may rise again.

Mary. There were not many hang'd for Wyatt's rising.

Lady Clarence. Nay, not two hundred.

Mary. I could weep for them
And her, and mine own self and all the world.

Lady Clarence. For her? for whom, your Grace?

Enter USHER.

Usher. The Cardinal.
Enter CARDINAL POLE (MARY rises).

Mary. Reginald Pole, what news hath plagued thy heart?

What makes thy favor like the bloodless head 10

Fallen on the block, and held up by the hair?

Philip? —

Pole. No, Philip is as warm in life as ever.

Mary. Ay, and then as cold as ever.
Is Calais taken?

Pole. Cousin, there hath chanced
A sharper harm to England and to Rome

Than Calais taken. Julius the Third
Was ever just, and mild, and father-like;

But this new Pope Caraffa, Paul the Fourth,

Not only reft me of that legateship

Which Julius gave me, and the legate-
ship

Annex'd to Canterbury — nay, but,
worse —

And yet I must obey the Holy Father,
And so must you, good cousin; —
worse than all,

A passing bell toll'd in a dying ear —
He hath cited me to Rome, for heresy,
Before his Inquisition.

Mary. I knew it, cousin.
But held from you all papers sent by
Rome,

That you might rest among us, till
the Pope,

To compass which I wrote myself to
Rome,

Reversed his doom, and that you
might not seem

To disobey his Holiness.

Pole. He hates Philip;
He is all Italian, and he hates the
Spaniard;

He cannot dream that *I* advised the
war;

Hestrikes thro' me at Philip and your-
self.

Nay, but I know it of old, he hates me
too;

So brands me in the stare of Chris-
tendom

A heretic!

Now, even now, when bow'd before
my time,

The house half-ruin'd ere the lease be
out;

When I should guide the Church in
peace at home,

After my twenty years of banishment,
And all my lifelong labor to uphold

The primacy — a heretic! Long ago,
When I was ruler in the patrimony,

I was too lenient to the Lutheran,
And I and learned friends among our-
selves

Would freely canvass certain Luther-
anisms.

What then, he knew I was no Lu-
theran.

A heretic!

He drew this shaft against me to the
head,

When it was thought I might be cho-
sen Pope,

But then withdrew it. In full con-
sistory,

When I was made archbishop, he ap-
proved me.

And how should he have sent me
legate hither,

Deeming me heretic? and what heresy
since?

But he was evermore mine enemy,
And hates the Spaniard — fiery-chol-
eric,

A drinker of black, strong, volcanic
wines,

That ever make him fierier. I, a here-
tic?

Your Highness knows that in pursu-
ing heresy

I have gone beyond your late Lord
Chancellor, —

He cried 'Enough! enough!' before
his death, —

Gone beyond him and mine own natu-
ral man —

It was God's cause — so far they call
me now

The scourge and butcher of their Eng-
lish church.

Mary. Have courage, your reward
is heaven itself.

Pole. They groan amen; they swarm
into the fire

Like flies — for what? no dogma.
They know nothing;

They burn for nothing.

Mary. You have done your
best.

Pole. Have done my best, and as a
faithful son,

That all day long hath wrought his
father's work,

When back he comes at evening hath
the door

Shut on him by the father whom he
loved,

His early follies cast into his teeth,
And the poor son turn'd out into the
street

To sleep, to die — I shall die of it, cou-
sin.

Mary. I pray you be not so discon-
solate;

I still will do mine utmost with the
Pope.

Poor cousin!

Have not I been the fast friend of your
life

Since mine began, and it was thought
we two

Might make one flesh, and cleave unto each other

As man and wife ?

Pole. Ah, cousin, I remember
How I would dandle you upon my knee

At lisping-age. I watch'd you dancing once

With your huge father ; he look'd the Great Harry,

You but his cockboat ; prettily you did it,

And innocently. No — we were not made

One flesh in happiness, no happiness here ;

But now we are made one flesh in misery ;

Our bridesmaids are not lovely — Dis-⁹⁰appointment,

Ingratitude, Injustice, Evil-tongue, Labor-in-vain.

Mary. Surely, not all in vain.
Peace, cousin, peace ! I am sad at heart myself.

Pole. Our altar is a mound of dead men's clay,

Dug from the grave that yawns for us beyond ;

And there is one Death stands behind the groom,

And there is one Death stands behind the bride —

Mary. Have you been looking at the 'Dance of Death' ?

Pole. No ; but these libellous papers which I found¹⁰⁰

Strewn in your palace. Look you here — the Pope

Pointing at me with 'Pole, the heretic,

Thou hast burnt others, do thou burn thyself,

Or I will burn thee ;' and this other ; see ! —

'We pray continually for the death Of our accursed Queen and Cardinal Pole.'

This last — I dare not read it her.

Mary. *[Aside.]* Away !

Why do you bring me these ?
I thought you knew me better. I never

read,
I tear them ; they come back upon my

dreams.

110

The hands that write them should be burnt clean off

As Cranmer's, and the fiends that utter them

Tongue-torn with pincers, lash'd to death, or lie

Famishing in 'black cells, while famish'd rats

Eat them alive. Why do they bring me these ?

Do you mean to drive me mad ?

Pole. I had forgotten
How these poor libels trouble you.

Your pardon,
Sweet cousin, and farewell ! 'O bubble world,

Whose colors in a moment break and fly !'

Why, who said that ? I know not — true enough !¹²⁰

[Puts up the papers, all but the last, which falls. Exit Pole.]

Alice. If Cranmer's spirit were a mocking one,

And heard these two, there might be sport for him. *[Aside.]*

Mary. Clarence, they hate me ; even while I speak

There lurks a silent dagger, listening In some dark closet, some long gal-

lery, drawn,

And panting for my blood as I go by.

Lady Clarence. Nay, madam, there be loyal papers too,

And I have often found them.

Mary. Find me one !
Lady Clarence. Ay, madam : but Sir Nicholas Heath, the Chan-

cellor,

Would see your Highness.

Mary. Wherefore should I see him ?
Lady Clarence. Well, Madam, he may bring you news from Philip.¹³¹

Mary. So, Clarence.
Lady Clarence. Let me first put up your hair ;

It tumbles all abroad.

Mary. And the gray dawn Of an old age that never will be mine

Is all the clearer seen. No, no ; what matters ?

Forlorn I am, and let me look forlorn.
Enter SIR NICHOLAS HEATH.

Heath. I bring your Majesty such grievous news

I grieve to bring it. Madam, Calais is taken.

Mary. What traitor spoke? Here, let my cousin Pole

Seize him and burn him for a Lutheran. ¹⁴⁰

Heath. Her Highness is unwell. I will retire.

Lady Clarence. Madam, your Chancellor, Sir Nicholas Heath.

Mary. Sir Nicholas! I am stunn'd — Nicholas Heath?

Methought some traitor smote me on the head.

What said you, my good lord, that our brave English

Had sallied out from Calais and driven back

The Frenchmen from their trenches?

Heath. Alas! no.

That gateway to the mainland over which

Our flag hath floated for two hundred years

Is France again.

Mary. So; but it is not lost —

Not yet. Send out; let England as of old

Rise lionlike, strike hard and deep into The prey they are rending from her —

ay, and rend

The renders too. Send out, send out, and make

Musters in all the counties; gather all From sixteen years to sixty; collect the fleet;

Let every craft that carries sail and gun

Steer toward Calais. Guisnes is not taken yet?

Heath. Guisnes is not taken yet.

Mary. There yet is hope.

Heath. Ah, madam, but your people are so cold; ¹⁶⁰

I do much fear that England will not care.

Methinks there is no manhood left among us.

Mary. Send out; I am too weak to stir abroad.

Tell my mind to the Council — to the Parliament;

Proclaim it to the winds. Thou art cold thyself

To babble of their coldness. O, would I were

My father for an hour! Away now — quick! *[Exit Heath.]*

I hoped I had served God with all my might!

It seems I have not. Ah! much heresy Shelter'd in Calais. Saints, I have re-

built ¹⁷⁰

Your shrines, set up your broken images;

Be comfortable to me. Suffer not That my brief reign in England be

defamed

Thro' all her angry chronicles hereafter By loss of Calais. Grant me Calais.

Philip,

We have made war upon the Holy Father

All for your sake. What good could come of that?

Lady Clarence. No, Madam, not against the Holy Father;

You did but help King Philip's war with France,

Your troops were never down in Italy.

Mary. I am a byword. Heretic and

rebel ¹⁸¹

Point at me and make merry. Philip gone!

And Calais gone! Time that I were gone too!

Lady Clarence. Nay, if the fetid gutter had a voice

And cried I was not clean, what should I care?

Or you, for heretic cries? And I believe,

Spite of your melancholy Sir Nicholas, Your England is as loyal as myself.

Mary (seeing the paper dropt by Pole).

There! there! another paper! Said you not ¹⁸⁹

Many of these were loyal? Shall I try If this be one of such?

Lady Clarence. Let it be, let it be. God pardon me! I have never yet

found one. *[Aside.]*

Mary (reads). 'Your people hate you as your husband hates you.'

Clarence, Clarence, what have I done? what sin

Beyond all grace, all pardon? Mother of God,

Thou knowest never woman meant so well,

And fared so ill in this disastrous world.

My people hate me and desire my death.

Lady Clarence. No, madam, no.

Mary. My husband hates me, and desires my death. ²⁰⁰

Lady Clarence. No, madam; these are libels.

Mary. I hate myself, and I desire my death.

Lady Clarence. Long live your Majesty! Shall Alice sing you One of her pleasant songs? Alice, my child,

Bring us your lute (*Alice goes*). They say the gloom of Saul

Was lighten'd by young David's harp.

Mary. Too young!
And never knew a Philip.

Re-enter ALICE.

Give me the lute.

He hates me!

(*She sings.*)

Hapless doom of woman happy in betrothing!

Beauty passes like a breath, and love is lost in loathing. ²¹⁰

Low, my lute; speak low, my lute, but say the world is nothing—

Low, lute, low!

Love will hover round the flowers when they first awaken;

Love will fly the fallen leaf, and not be overtaken.

Low, my lute! O, low, my lute! we fade and are forsaken—

Low, dear lute, low!

Take it away! not low enough for me!

Alice. Your Grace hath a low voice.

Mary. How dare you say it? Even for that he hates me. A low voice

Lost in a wilderness where none can hear! ²²⁰

A voice of shipwreck on a shoreless sea!

A low voice from the dust and from the grave!

(*Sitting on the ground.*) There, am I low enough now?

Alice. Good Lord! how grim and ghastly looks her Grace,

With both her knees drawn upward to her chin.

There was an old-world tomb beside my father's,

And this was open'd, and the dead were found

Sitting, and in this fashion; she looks a corpse.

Enter LADY MAGDALEN DACRES.

Lady Magdalen. Madam, the Count de Feria waits without, In hopes to see your Highness.

Lady Clarence (pointing to Mary).

Wait he must— ²³⁰

Her trance again. She neither sees nor hears,

And may not speak for hours.

Lady Magdalen. Unhappiest Of queens and wives and women!

Alice (in the foreground with Lady Magdalen). And all along

Of Philip.

Lady Magdalen. Not so loud! Our Clarence there

Sees ever such an aureole round the Queen,

It gilds the greatest wronger of her peace,

Who stands the nearest to her.

Alice. Ay, this Philip; I used to love the Queen with all my heart—

God help me, but methinks I love her less

For such a dotage upon such a man. ²⁴⁰

I would I were as tall and strong as you.

Lady Magdalen. I seem half-shamed at times to be so tall.

Alice. You are the stateliest deer in all the herd—

Beyond his aim—but I am small and scandalous,

And love to hear bad tales of Philip.

Lady Magdalen. Why? I never heard him utter worse of you

Than that you were low-statured.

Alice. Does he think Low stature is low nature, or all women's

Low as his own?

Lady Magdalen. There you strike in the nail.

This coarseness is a want of phantasy. It is the low man thinks the woman

low; ²⁵¹

Sin is too dull to see beyond himself.

Alice. Ah, Magdalen, sin is bold as well as dull.

How dared he?

Lady Magdalen. Stupid soldiers oft are bold.

Poor lads, they see not what the general sees,

A risk of utter ruin. I am *not*

Beyond his aim, or was not.

Alice. Who? Not you? Tell, tell me; save my credit with myself.

Lady Magdalen. I never breathed it to a bird in the caves,

Would not for all the stars and maiden moon ²⁶⁰

Our drooping Queen should know! In Hampton Court

My window look'd upon the corridor;

And I was robing; this poor throat of mine

Barer than I should wish a man to see it —

When he we speak of drove the window back,

And, like a thief, push'd in his royal hand;

But by God's providence a good stout staff

Lay near me, and you know me strong of arm.

I do believe I lamed his Majesty's For a day or two, tho', give the devil his due, ²⁷⁰

I never found he bore me any spite.

Alice. I would she could have wedded that poor youth,

My Lord of Devon, — light enough, God knows,

And mixt with Wyatt's rising, — and the boy

Not out of him — but neither cold, coarse, cruel,

And more than all — no Spaniard.

Lady Clarence. Not so loud. Lord Devon, girls! what are you whispering here?

Alice. Probing an old state-secret — how it chanced

That this young earl was sent on foreign travel,

Not lost his head.

Lady Clarence. There was no proof against him. ²⁸⁰

Alice. Nay, madam; did not Gardiner intercept

A letter which the Count de Noailles wrote

To that dead traitor Wyatt, with full proof

Of Courtenay's treason? What became of that?

Lady Clarence. Some say that Gardiner, out of love for him,

Burnt it, and some relate that it was lost

When Wyatt sack'd the Chancellor's house in Southwark.

Let dead things rest.

Alice. Ay, and with him who died Alone in Italy.

Lady Clarence. Much changed, I hear,

Had put off levity and put graveness on. ²⁹⁰

The foreign courts report him in his manner

Noble as his young person and an old shield.

It might be so — but all is over now; He caught a chill in the lagoons of Venice,

And died in Padua.

Mary (looking up suddenly). Died in the true faith?

Lady Clarence. Ay, madam, happily.

Mary. Happier he than I.

Lady Magdalen. It seems her Highness hath awaken'd. Think you

That I might dare to tell her that the count —

Mary. I will see no man hence for evermore,

Saving my confessor and my cousin Pole. ³⁰⁰

Lady Magdalen. It is the Count de Feria, my dear lady.

Mary. What count?

Lady Magdalen. The Count de Feria, from his Majesty

King Philip.

Mary. Philip! quick! loop up my hair!

Throw cushions on that seat, and make it throne-like.

Arrange my dress — the gorgeous Indian shawl

That Philip brought me in our happy days! —

That covers all. So — am I somewhat queenlike,

Bride of the mightiest sovereign upon earth?

Lady Clarence. Ay, so your Grace would bide a moment yet. 310
Mary. No, no, he brings a letter. I may die
 Before I read it. Let me see him at once.

Enter COUNT DE FERIA (kneels).

Feria. I trust your Grace is well,
(Aside.) How her hand burns!

Mary. I am not well, but it will better me,
 Sir Count, to read the letter which you bring.

Feria. Madam, I bring no letter.

Mary. How! no letter?

Feria. His Highness is so vex'd with strange affairs—

Mary. That his own wife is no affair of his.

Feria. Nay, madam, nay! he sends his veriest love, 319
 And says he will come quickly.

Mary. Doth he, indeed?
 You, sir, do you remember what you said

When last you came to England?

Feria. Madam, I brought My King's congratulations; it was hoped

Your Highness was once more in happy state

To give him an heir male.

Mary. Sir, you said more; You said he would come quickly. I had horses

On all the road from Dover, day and night;

On all the road from Harwich, night and day;

But the child came not, and the husband came not;

And yet he will come quickly. — Thou hast learnt 330

Thy lesson, and I mine. There is no need

For Philip so to shame himself again. Return,

And tell him that I know he comes no more.

Tell him at last I know his love is dead,

And that I am in state to bring forth death—

Thou art commission'd to Elizabeth, And not to me!

Feria. Mere compliments and wishes.

But shall I take some message from your Grace?

Mary. Tell her to come and close my dying eyes, 340
 And wear my crown, and dance upon my grave.

Feria. Then I may say your Grace will see your sister?

Your Grace is too low-spirited. Air and sunshine.

I would we had you, madam, in our warm Spain.

You droop in your dim London.

Mary. Have him away! I sicken of his readiness.

Lady Clarence. My Lord Count, Her Highness is too ill for colloquy.

Feria (kneels and kisses her hand). I wish her Highness better.

(Aside.) How her hand burns! *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE III

A HOUSE NEAR LONDON

ELIZABETH, STEWARD OF THE HOUSEHOLD, ATTENDANTS.

Elizabeth. There's half an angel wrong'd in your account; Methinks I am all angel, that I bear it Without more ruffling. Cast it o'er again.

Steward. I were whole devil if I wrong'd you, madam.

[Exit Steward.]

Attendant. The Count de FERIA, from the King of Spain.

Elizabeth. Ah!—let him enter.

Nay, you need not go:

[To her Ladies]

Remain within the chamber, but apart. We'll have no private conference.

Welcome to England!

Enter FERIA.

Feria. Fair island star!

Elizabeth. I shine! What else, Sir Count?

Feria. As far as France, and into Philip's heart. 10

My King would know if you be fairly served,

And lodged, and treated.

Elizabeth. You see the lodging, sir. I am well-served, and am in everything Most loyal and most grateful to the Queen.

Feria. You should be grateful to my master, too.
He spoke of this; and unto him you owe
That Mary hath acknowledged you her heir.

Elizabeth. No, not to her nor him; but to the people,
Who know my right, and love me, as I love
The people! whom God aid!

Feria. You will be Queen, And, were I Philip—

Elizabeth. Wherefore pause you—what? ²¹

Feria. Nay, but I speak from mine own self, not him.
Your royal sister cannot last; your hand
Will be much coveted! What a delicate one!

Our Spanish ladies have none such—and there,
Were you in Spain, this fine fair gossamer gold—
Like sun-gilt breathings on a frosty dawn—

That hovers round your shoulder—
Elizabeth. Is it so fine? Troth, some have said so.

Feria. — would be deemed a miracle.

Elizabeth. Your Philip hath gold hair and golden beard; ³⁰
There must be ladies many with hair like mine.

Feria. Some few of Gothic blood have golden hair,
But none like yours.

Elizabeth. I am happy you approve it.

Feria. But as to Philip and your Grace,—consider,—
If such a one as you should match with Spain,
What hinders but that Spain and England join'd
Should make the mightiest empire earth has known.
Spain would be England on her seas, and England
Mistress of the Indies.

Elizabeth. It may chance that England
Will be the Mistress of the Indies yet, ⁴⁰
Without the help of Spain.

Feria. Impossible; Except you put Spain down.
Wide of the mark even for a madman's dream.

Elizabeth. Perhaps; but we have seamen. Count de Feria,
I take it that the King hath spoken to you;
But is Don Carlos such a goodly match?

Feria. Don Carlos, Madam, is but twelve years old.

Elizabeth. Ay, tell the King that I will muse upon it;
He is my good friend, and I would keep him so;

But—he would have me Catholic of Rome, ⁵⁰
And that I scarce can be; and, sir, till now

My sister's marriage, and my father's marriages,
Make me full fain to live and die a maid.

But I am much beholden to your King. Have you aught else to tell me?

Feria. Nothing, madam, Save that methought I gather'd from the Queen
That she would see your Grace before she—died.

Elizabeth. God's death! and wherefore spake you not before?

We dally with our lazy moments here, And hers are number'd. Horses there, without! ⁶⁰

I am much beholden to the King, your master.

Why did you keep me prating? Horses, there!

[Exit Elizabeth, etc.]

Feria. So from a clear sky falls the thunderbolt!

Don Carlos? Madam, if you marry Philip,

Then I and he will snaffle your 'God's death,'

And break your paces in, and make you tame.

God's death, forsooth—you do not know King Philip! [Exit.]



QUEEN ELIZABETH

SCENE IV

LONDON. BEFORE THE PALACE

A light burning within. Voices of the night passing.

First. Is not yon light in the Queen's chamber?

Second. Ay, They say she's dying.

First. So is Cardinal Pole. May the great angels join their wings, and make Down for their heads to heaven!

Second. Amen. Come on. [*Exeunt.*

TWO OTHERS.

First. There's the Queen's light. I hear she cannot live.

Second. God curse her and her legate! Gardiner burns Already; but to pay them full in kind, The hottest hold in all the devil's den Were but a sort of winter. Sir, in Guernsey,

I watch'd a woman burn; and in her agony

The mother came upon her—a child was born—

And, sir, they hurl'd it back into the fire,

That, being but baptized in fire, the babe

Might be in fire for ever. Ah, good neighbor,
There should be something fierier than fire

To yield them their deserts.

First. Amen to all
Your wish, and further ! ¹⁷

A Third Voice. Deserts ! Amen to what ? Whose deserts ? Yours ? You have a gold ring on your finger, and soft raiment about your body ; and is not the woman up yonder sleeping after all she has done, in peace and quietness, on a soft bed, in a closed room, with light, fire, physic, tendance ; and I have seen the true men of Christ lying famine-dead by scores, and under no ceiling but the cloud that wept on them, not for them. ³⁰

First. Friend, tho' so late, it is not safe to preach.

You had best go home. What are you ?

Third. What am I ? One who cries continually with sweat and tears to the Lord God that it would please Him out of His infinite love to break down all kingship and queenship, all priesthood and prelacy ; to cancel and abolish all bonds of human allegiance, all the magistracy, all the nobles, and all the wealthy ; and to send us again, according to His promise, the one King, the Christ, and all things in common, as in the day of the first church, when Christ Jesus was King. ⁴⁶

First. If ever I heard a madman, — let's away !
Why, you long-winded — Sir, you go beyond me.

I pride myself on being moderate.
Good night ! Go home ! Besides, you curse so loud,
The watch will hear you, Get you home at once. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V

LONDON. A ROOM IN THE PALACE

A Gallery on one side. The moonlight streaming through a range of windows on the wall opposite. MARY, LADY

CLARENCE, LADY MAGDALEN DANCES, ALICE. *QUEEN pacing the Gallery. A writing-table in front. QUEEN comes to the table and writes and goes again, pacing the Gallery.*

Lady Clarence. Mine eyes are dim : what hath she written ? read.

Alice. 'I am dying, Philip ; come to me.'

Lady Magdalen. There — up and down, poor lady, up and down.

Alice. And how her shadow crosses one by one

The moonlight casements pattern'd on the wall,

Following her like her sorrow ! She turns again.

[*Queen sits and writes, and goes again.*]

Lady Clarence. What hath she written now ?

Alice. Nothing ; but 'come, come, come,' and all awry,

And blotted by her tears. This cannot last. [*Queen returns.*]

Mary. I whistle to the bird has broken cage, ¹⁰

And all in vain. [*Sitting down.*]

Calais gone — Guisnes gone, too — and Philip gone !

Lady Clarence. Dear madam, Philip is but at the wars ;

I cannot doubt but that he comes again ;

And he is with you in a measure still. I never look'd upon so fair a likeness

As your great King in armor there, his hand

Upon his helmet.

[*Pointing to the portrait of Philip on the wall.*]

Mary. Doth he not look noble ? I had heard of him in battle over seas, And I would have my warrior all in arms. ²⁰

He said it was not courtly to stand helmeted

Before the Queen. He had his gracious moment,

Altho' you'll not believe me. How he smiles

As if he loved me yet !

Lady Clarence. And so he does.

Mary. He never loved me — nay, he could not love me.

It was his father's policy against France.

I am eleven years older than he,

Poor boy ! *[Weeps.]*

Alice. That was a lusty boy of twenty-seven ; *[Aside.]*

Poor enough in God's grace !

Mary. And all in vain !
The Queen of Scots is married to the Dauphin, ³¹

And Charles, the lord of this low world, is gone ;

And all his wars and wisdoms past away ;

And in a moment I shall follow him.

Lady Clarence. Nay, dearest lady, see your good physician.

Mary. Drugs — but he knows they cannot help me — says

That rest is all — tells me I must not think —

That I must rest — I shall rest by and by.

Catch the wild cat, cage him, and when he springs

And maims himself against the bars, say 'rest,' ⁴⁰

Why, you must kill him if you would have him rest —

Dead or alive, you cannot make him happy.

Lady Clarence. Your Majesty has lived so pure a life,
And done such mighty things by Holy Church,

I trust that God will make you happy yet.

Mary. What is the strange thing happiness ? Sit down here.

Tell me thine happiest hour.

Lady Clarence. I will, if that May make your Grace forget yourself a little.

There runs a shallow brook across our field

For twenty miles, where the black crow flies five, ⁵⁰

And doth so bound and babble all the way

As if itself were happy. It was May-time,

And I was walking with the man I loved.

I loved him, but I thought I was not loved.

And both were silent, letting the wild brook

Speak for us — till he stoop'd and gather'd one

From out a bed of thick forget-me-nots,

Look'd hard and sweet at me, and gave it me.

I took it, tho' I did not know I took it,

And put it in my bosom, and all at once ⁶⁰

I felt his arms about me, and his lips —

Mary. O God ! I have been too slack, too slack ;

There are Hot Gospellers even among our guards —

Nobles we dared not touch. We have but burnt

The heretic priest, workmen, and women and children.

Wet, famine, ague, fever, storm, wreck, wrath, —

We have so play'd the coward ; but by God's grace,

We'll follow Philip's leading, and set up

The Holy Office here — garner the wheat,

And burn the tares with unquenchable fire ! ⁷⁰

Burn ! —

Fie, what a savor ! tell the cooks to close

The doors of all the offices below.

Latimer !

Sir, we are private with our women here —

Ever a rough, blunt, and uncourtly fellow —

Thou light a torch that never will go out !

'Tis out — mine flames. Women, the Holy Father

Has ta'en the legateship from our cousin Pole —

Was that well done ? and poor Pole pines of it, ⁸⁰

As I do, to the death. I am but a woman,

I have no power. — Ah, weak and meek old man,

Sevenfold dishonor'd even in the sight Of thine own sectaries — No, no. No

pardon ! —

Why, that was false; there is the right hand still

Beckons me hence.

Sir, you were burnt for heresy, not for treason,

Remember that! 't was I and Bonner did it,

And Pole; we are three to one — Have you found mercy there,

Grant it me here — and see, he smiles and goes, 90

Gentle as in life.

Alice. Madam, who goes? King Philip?

Mary. No, Philip comes and goes, but never goes.

Women, when I am dead,

Open my heart, and there you will find written

Two names, Philip and Calais; open his, —

So that he have one, —

You will find Philip only, policy, policy, —

Ay, worse than that — not one hour true to me!

Foul maggots crawling in a fester'd vice!

Adulterous to the very heart of hell! 100

Hast thou a knife?

Alice. Ay, madam, but o' God's mercy —

Mary. Fool, think'st thou I would peril mine own soul

By slaughter of the body? I could not, girl,

Not this way — callous with a constant stripe,

Unwoundable. The knife!

Alice. Take heed, take heed! The blade is keen as death.

Mary. This Philip shall not stare in upon me in my haggardness;

Old, miserable, diseased,

Incapable of children. Come thou down.

[*Cuts out the picture and throws it down.*]

Lie there. (*Wails.*) O God, I have kill'd my Philip!

Alice. No, 110
Madam, you have but cut the canvas out;

We can replace it.

Mary. All is well then; rest — I will to rest; he said I must have rest.

[*Cries of 'Elizabeth' in the street.*]
A cry! What's that? Elizabeth? revolt?

A new Northumberland, another Wyatt?

I'll fight it on the threshold of the grave.

Lady Clarence. Madam, your royal sister comes to see you.

Mary. I will not see her.

Who knows if Boleyn's daughter be my sister?

I will see none except the priest. Your arm. [*To Lady Clarence.*]

O Saint of Aragon, with that sweet worn smile 121

Among thy patient wrinkles — help me hence. [*Exeunt.*]

The Priest passes. Enter ELIZABETH and SIR WILLIAM CECIL.

Elizabeth. Good counsel yours. — No one in waiting? still,

As if the chamberlain were Death himself!

The room she sleeps in — is not this the way?

No, that way there are voices. Am I too late?

Cecil . . . God guide me lest I lose the way! [*Exit Elizabeth.*]

Cecil. Many points weather'd, many perilous ones,

At last a harbor opens; but therein sunk rocks — they need fine steering

— much it is 130

To be nor mad nor bigot — have a mind —

Nor let priests' talk, or dream of worlds to be,

Miscolor things about her — sudden touches

For him, or him — sunk rocks; no passionate faith —

But — if let be — balance and compromise;

Brave, wary, sane to the heart of her — a Tudor

School'd by the shadow of death — a Boleyn, too,

Glancing across the Tudor — not so well.

Enter ALICE.

How is the good Queen now?

Alice. Away from Philip.

Back in her childhood — prattling to
 her mother ¹⁴⁰
 Of her betrothal to the Emperor
 Charles,
 And childlike-jealous of him again —
 and once
 She thank'd her father sweetly for his
 book
 Against that godless German. Ah,
 those days
 Were happy. It was never merry
 world
 In England since the Bible came
 among us.

Cecil. And who says that?

Alice. It is a saying among the
 Catholics.

Cecil. It never will be merry world
 in England

Till all men have their Bible, rich and
 poor. ¹⁵⁰

Alice. The Queen is dying, or you
 dare not say it.

Enter ELIZABETH.

Elizabeth. The Queen is dead.

Cecil. Then here she stands! my
 homage.

Elizabeth. She knew me, and ac-
 knowledged me her heir,

Pray'd me to pay her debts, and keep
 the Faith;

Then claspt the cross, and pass'd away
 in peace.

I left her lying still and beautiful,
 More beautiful than in life. Why

would you vex yourself,
 Poor sister? Sir, I swear I have no

heart



SIR WILLIAM CECIL

To be your Queen. To reign is rest-
less fence,
Tierce, quart, and trickery. Peace is
with the dead. ¹⁶⁰

Her life was winter, for her spring
was nipt;

And she loved much: pray God she
be forgiven!

Cecil. Peace with the dead, who
never were at peace!

Yet she loved one so much — I needs
must say —

That never English monarch dying
left

England so little.

Elizabeth. But with Cecil's aid
And others, if our person be secured
From traitor stabs — we will make
England great.

*Enter PAGET, and other LORDS OF
THE COUNCIL, SIR RALPH BAGEN-
HALL, etc.*

Lords. God save Elizabeth, the
Queen of England!

Bagenhall. God save the Crown!
the Papacy is no more. ¹⁷⁰

Paget (aside). Are we so sure of
that?

Acclamation. God save the Queen!



LORD LYTTON

HAROLD

A DRAMA

TO HIS EXCELLENCY

THE RIGHT HON. LORD LYTTON,

Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

MY DEAR LORD LYTTON, — After old-world records — such as the Bayeux tapestry and the Roman de Rou, — Edward Freeman's History of the Norman Conquest, and your father's Historical Romance treating of the same times, have been mainly helpful to me in writing this Drama. Your father dedicated his 'Harold' to my father's brother; allow me to dedicate my 'Harold' to yourself.

A. TENNYSON.

SHOW-DAY AT BATTLE ABBEY, 1876

A GARDEN here — May breath and bloom of spring —
The cuckoo yonder from an English elm
Crying, 'With my false egg I overwhelm
The native nest;' and fancy hears the ring

Of harness, and that deathful arrow sing,
 And Saxon battle-axe clang on Norman helm.
 Here rose the dragon-banner of our realm ;
 Here fought, here fell, our Norman-slander'd king.
 O Garden blossoming out of English blood !
 O strange hate-healer Time ! We stroll and stare
 Where might made right eight hundred years ago ;
 Might, right ? ay, good, so all things make for good —
 But he and he, if soul be soul, are where
 Each stands full face with all he did below.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

KING EDWARD THE CONFESSOR.
 STIGAND, *created Archbishop of Canterbury by the Antipope Benedict.*
 ALDRED, *Archbishop of York.*
 THE NORMAN BISHOP OF LONDON.
 HAROLD, *Earl of Wessex, afterwards King of England* }
 TOSTIG, *Earl of Northumbria* } *Sons of Godwin.*
 GURTH, *Earl of East Anglia* }
 LEOFWIN, *Earl of Kent and Essex* }
 WULFNOTH
 COUNT WILLIAM OF NORMANDY.
 WILLIAM RUFUS.
 WILLIAM MALET, *a Norman Noble.*¹
 EDWIN, *Earl of Mercia* }
 MORCAR, *Earl of Northumbria after Tostig* } *Sons of Alfgar of Mercia.*
 GAMEL, *a Northumbrian Thane.*
 GUY, *Count of Ponthieu.*
 ROLF, *a Ponthieu Fisherman.*
 HUGH MARGOT, *a Norman Monk.*
 OSGOD AND ATHELRIC, *Canons from Waltham.*
 THE QUEEN, *Edward the Confessor's Wife, Daughter of Godwin.*
 ALDWYTH, *Daughter of Alfgar and widow of Griffyth, King of Wales.*
 EDITH, *Ward of King Edward.*

Courtiers, Earls and Thanes, Men-at-Arms, Canons of Waltham, Fishermen, etc.

HAROLD

ACT I

SCENE I. — LONDON. THE KING'S PALACE

(*A comet seen through the open window.*)

ALDWYTH, GAMEL, COURTIERS *talking together.*

First Courtier. Lo ! there once more
 — this is the seventh night !
 Yon grimly-glaring, treble-brandish'd
 scourge
 Of England !

Second Courtier. Horrible !

First Courtier. Look you, there's a
 star

That dances in it as mad with agony !

Third Courtier. Ay, like a spirit in

hell who skips and flies

To right and left, and cannot scape the

flame.

Second Courtier. Steam'd upward

from the undescendible

Abysm.

First Courtier. Or floated downward

from the throne

Of God Almighty.

Aldwyth. Gamel, son of Orm,

What thinkest thou this means ?

Gamel. War, my dear lady !

Aldwyth. Doth this affright thee ?

Gamel. Mightily, my dear lady !

¹ . . . quidam partim Normannus et Anglus
 Computer Herald. (*Guy of Amiens*, 587.)

Aldwyth. Stand by me then, and
look upon my face, 12
Not on the comet.

Enter MORCAR.

Brother! why so pale?
Morcar. It glares in heaven, it flares
upon the Thames,
The people are as thick as bees below,
They hum like bees, — they cannot
speak — for awe;
Look to the skies, then to the river,
strike
Their hearts, and hold their babies up
to it.
I think that they would Molochize
them too,
To have the heavens clear.

Aldwyth. They fright not me.

Enter LEOFWIN, after him GURTH.
Ask thou Lord Leofwin what he thinks
of this! 21

Morcar. Lord Leofwin, dost thou
believe that these
Three rods of blood-red fire up yonder
mean
The doom of England and the wrath
of Heaven?

Bishop of London (passing). Did ye
not cast with bestial violence
Our holy Norman bishops down from
all
Their thrones in England? I alone re-
main.

Why should not Heaven be wroth?
Leofwin. With us, or thee?

Bishop of London. Did ye not outlaw
your archbishop Robert,
Robert of Jumièges — well-nigh mur-
der him too? 30

Is there no reason for the wrath of
Heaven?

Leofwin. Why, then the wrath of
Heaven hath three tails,
The devil only one.

[*Exit Bishop of London.*

Enter ARCHBISHOP STIGAND.

Ask our archbishop.
Stigand should know the purposes of
Heaven.

Stigand. Not I. I cannot read the
face of heaven;
Perhaps our vines will grow the better
for it.

Leofwin (laughing). He can but read
the King's face on his coins.

Stigand. Ay, ay, young lord, *there*
the King's face is power.

Gurth. O father, mock not at a pub-
lic fear,

But tell us, is this pendent hell in hea-
ven 40

A harm to England?

Stigand. Ask it of King Edward!
And he may tell thee I am a harm to
England.

Old uncanonical Stigand — ask of *me*
Who had my pallium from an Anti-
pope!

Not he the man — for in our windy
world

What's up is faith, what's down is
heresy.

Our friends, the Normans, help to
shake his chair.

I have a Norman fever on me, son,
And cannot answer sanely. — What it
means?

Ask our broad earl.

[*Pointing to Harold, who enters.*

Harold (seeing Gamel). Hail, Gamel,
son of Orm! 50

Albeit no rolling stone, my good friend
Gamel,

Thou hast rounded since we met. Thy
life at home

Is easier than mine here. Look! am I
not

Work-wan, flesh-fallen?

Gamel. Art thou sick, good earl?

Harold. Sick as an autumn swallow
for a voyage,

Sick for an idle week of hawk and
hound

Beyond the seas — a change! When
camest thou hither?

Gamel. To-day, good earl.

Harold. Is the North quiet, Gamel?

Gamel. Nay, there be murmurs, for
thy brother breaks us

With over-taxing — quiet, ay, as yet —
Nothing as yet.

Harold. Stand by him, mine old
friend, 61

Thou art a great voice in Northumber-
land!

Advise him; speak him sweetly, he
will hear thee.

He is passionate, but honest. Stand
thou by him!

More talk of this to-morrow, if yon
weird sign

Not blast us in our dreams. — Well,
father Stigand —

[*To Stigand, who advances to him.*
Stigand (pointing to the comet). War
there, my son ? is that the doom
of England ?

Harold. Why not the doom of all the
world as well ?

For all the world sees it as well as
England.

These meteors came and went before
our day,

Not harming any ; it threatens us no
more

Than French or Norman. War ? the
worst that follows

Things that seem jerk'd out of the
common rut

Of Nature is the hot religious fool,
Who, seeing war in heaven, for hea-
ven's credit

Makes it on earth — but look, where
Edward draws

A faint foot hither, leaning upon Tos-
tig.

He hath learnt to love our Tostig
much of late.

Leofwin. And he hath learnt, despite
the tiger in him,

To sleek and supple himself to the
King's hand.

Gurth. I trust the kingly touch that
cures the evil

May serve to charm the tiger out of
him.

Leofwin. He hath as much of cat as
tiger in him.

Our Tostig loves the hand and not the
man.

Harold. Nay ! Better die than lie !

Enter KING, QUEEN, and TOSTIG.

Edward. In heaven signs !

Signs upon earth ! signs everywhere !
your priests

Gross, worldly, simoniacal, unlearn'd !
They scarce can read their Psalter ;

and your churches

Uncouth, unhandsome, while in Nor-
manland

God speaks thro' abler voices, as He
dwells

In statelier shrines. I say not this, as
being

Half Norman-blooded, nor, as some
have held,

Because I love the Norman better —
no,

But dreading God's revenge upon this
realm

For narrowness and coldness ; and I
say it

For the last time perchance, before I go
To find the sweet refreshment of the

Saints.

I have lived a life of utter purity ;
I have builded the great church of

Holy Peter ;

I have wrought miracles — to God the
glory ! —

And miracles will in my name be
wrought

Hereafter. — I have fought the fight
and go —

I see the flashing of the gates of
pearl —

And it is well with me, tho' some of
you

Have scorn'd me — ay — but after I
am gone

Woe, woe to England ! I have had a
vision ;

The Seven Sleepers in the cave at
Ephesus

Have turn'd from right to left.

Harold. My most dear master,
What matters ? let them turn from

left to right

And sleep again.

Tostig. Too hardy with thy King !
A life of prayer and fasting well may

see

Deeper into the mysteries of heaven
Than thou, good brother.

Aldryth (aside). Sees he into thine,
That thou wouldst have his promise

for the crown ?

Edward. Tostig says true ; my son,
thou art too hard,

Not stagger'd by this ominous earth
and heaven ;

But heaven and earth are threads of
the same loom,

Play into one another, and weave the
web

That may confound thee yet.

Harold. Nay, I trust not,
For I have served thee long and hon-
estly.

Edward.

I know it, son ; I am not
thankless ; thou

Hast broken all my foes, lighten'd for me

The weight of this poor crown, and left me time

And peace for prayer to gain a better one.

Twelve years of service! England loves thee for it.

Thou art the man to rule her!

Aldwyth (aside). So, not Tostig!

Harold. And after those twelve years a boon, my King.

Respite, a holiday, — thyself wast wont

To love the chase, — thy leave to set my feet

On board, and hunt and hawk beyond the seas!

Edward. What, with this flaming horror overhead?

Harold. Well, when it passes then.

Edward. Ay, if it pass.

Go not to Normandy — go not to Normandy.

Harold. And wherefore not, my King, to Normandy?

Is not my brother Wulfnoth hostage there

For my dead father's loyalty to thee? I pray thee, let me hence and bring him home.

Edward. Not thee, my son; some other messenger.

Harold. And why not me, my lord, to Normandy?

Is not the Norman Count thy friend and mine?

Edward. I pray thee, do not go to Normandy.

Harold. Because my father drove the Normans out

Of England? — That was many a summer gone —

Forgotten and forgiven by them and thee.

Edward. Harold, I will not yield thee leave to go.

Harold. Why, then to Flanders. I will hawk and hunt

In Flanders.

Edward. Be there not fair woods and fields

In England? Wilful, wilful! Go — the Saints

Pilot and prosper all thy wandering out

And homeward! — Tostig, I am faint again. —

Son Harold, I will in and pray for thee.

[*Exit, leaning on Tostig, and followed by Stigand, Morcar, and Courtiers.*]

Harold. What lies upon the mind of our good King,

That he should harp this way on Normandy?

Queen. Brother, the King is wiser than he seems;

And Tostig knows it; Tostig loves the King.

Harold. And love should know; and — be the King so wise, —

Then Tostig too were wiser than he seems.

I love the man, but not his phantasies.

Re-enter TOSTIG

Well, brother,

When didst thou hear from thy Northumbria?

Tostig. When did I hear aught but this 'When' from thee?

Leave me alone, brother, with my Northumbria;

She is my mistress, let me look to her! The King hath made me earl; make me not fool!

Nor make the King a fool, who made me earl!

Harold. No, Tostig — lest I make myself a fool

Who made the King who made thee make thee earl.

Tostig. Why chafe me then? Thou knowest I soon go wild.

Gurth. Come, come! as yet thou art not gone so wild

But thou canst hear the best and wisest of us.

Harold. So says old Gurth, not I; yet hear! thine earldom,

Tostig, hath been a kingdom. Their old crown

Is yet a force among them, a sun set But leaving light enough for Alfgar's house

To strike thee down by — nay, this ghastly glare

May heat their fancies.

Tostig. My most worthy brother, Thou art the quietest man in all the world —

Ay, ay, and wise in peace and great in war —

Pray God the people choose thee for their king!

But all the powers of the house of Godwin

Are not enframed in thee.

Harold. Thank the Saints, no! But thou hast drain'd them shallow by thy tolls,

And thou art ever here about the King.

Thine absence well may seem a want of care.

Cling to their love; for, now the sons of Godwin

Sit topmost in the field of England, envy,

Like the rough bear beneath the tree, good brother,

Waits till the man let go.

Tostig. Good counsel truly! I heard from my Northumbria yesterday.

Harold. How goes it then with thy Northumbria? Well?

Tostig. And wouldst thou that it went aught else than well? 190

Harold. I would it went as well as with mine earldom, Leofwin's and Gurth's.

Tostig. Ye govern milder men.

Gurth. We have made them milder by just government.

Tostig. Ay, ever give yourselves your own good word.

Leofwin. An honest gift, by all the Saints, if giver

And taker be but honest! but they bribe

Each other, and so often, an honest world

Will not believe them.

Harold. I may tell thee, Tostig, I heard from thy Northumberland today.

Tostig. From spies of thine to spy my nakedness 200

In my poor North.

Harold. There is a movement there, A blind one — nothing yet.

Tostig. Crush it at once With all the power I have! — I must — I will! —

Crush it half-born! Full still? or wisdom there,

My wise head-shaking Harold?

Harold. Make not thou The nothing something. Wisdom when in power

And wisest should not frown as Power, but smile

As kindness, watching all, till the true must

Shall make her strike as Power: but when to strike —

O Tostig, O dear brother — if they prance, 210

Rein in, not lash them, lest they rear and run

And break both neck and axle.

Tostig. Good again! Good counsel tho' scarce needed.

Pour not water

In the full vessel running out at top To swamp the house.

Leofwin. Nor thou be a wild thing Out of the waste, to turn and bite the hand

Would help thee from the trap.

Tostig. Thou playest in tune.

Leofwin. To the deaf adder thee, that wilt not dance

However wisely charm'd.

Tostig. No more, no more!

Gurth. I likewise cry 'no more.' Unwholesome talk 220

For Godwin's house! Leofwin, thou hast a tongue!

Tostig, thou look'st as thou wouldst spring upon him.

Saint Olaf, not while I am by! Come, come,

Join hands, let brethren dwell in unity; Let kith and kin stand close as our shield-wall,

Who breaks us then? I say, thou hast a tongue,

And Tostig is not stout enough to bear it.

Vex him not, Leofwin.

Tostig. No, I am not vext, — Altho' ye seek to vex me, one and all.

I have to make report of my good earldom 230

To the good King who gave it — not to you —

Not any of you. — I am not vext at all.

Harold. The King? the King is ever at his prayers;

In all that handles matter of the state I am the King.

Tostig. That shalt thou never be
If I can thwart thee.

Harold. Brother, brother !

Tostig. Away !
[*Exit Tostig.*]

Queen. Spite of this grisly star ye
three must gall

Poor Tostig.

Leofwin. Tostig, sister, galls him-
self ;

He cannot smell a rose but pricks his
nose

Against the thorn, and rails against
the rose. 240

Queen. I am the only rose of all
the stock

That never thorn'd him ; Edward
loves him, so

Ye hate him. Harold always hated
him.

Why — how they fought when boys
— and, Holy Mary !

How Harold used to beat him !

Harold. Why, boys will fight.
Leofwin would often fight me, and I
beat him.

Even old Gurth would fight. I had
much ado

To hold mine own against old Gurth.
Old Gurth,

We fought like great States for grave
cause ; but Tostig —

On a sudden — at a something — for a
nothing — 250

The boy would fust me hard, and
when we fought

I conquer'd, and he loved me none
the less,

Till thou wouldst get him all apart,
and tell him

That where he was but worsted he
was wrong'd.

Ah ! thou hast taught the King to
spoil him too ;

Now the spoilt child sways both.
Take heed, take heed ;

Thou art the Queen ; ye are boy and
girl no more.

Side not with Tostig in any violence,
Lest thou be sideways guilty of the
violence.

Queen. Come, fall not foul on me.
I leave thee, brother. 260

Harold. Nay, my good sister —

[*Reunt Queen, Harold, Gurth,
and Leofwin.*]

Aldwyth. Gamel, son of Orm,
What thinkest thou this means ?

[*Pointing to the comet.*]

Gamel. War, my dear lady,
War, waste, plague, famine, all ma-
lignities.

Aldwyth. It means the fall of Tos-
tig from his earldom.

Gamel. That were too small a mat-
ter for a comet !

Aldwyth. It means the lifting of
the house of Alfgar.

Gamel. Too small ! a comet would
not show for that !

Aldwyth. Not small for thee, if
thou canst compass it.

Gamel. Thy love ?

Aldwyth. As much as I can give
thee, man ; 269

This Tostig is, or like to be, a tyrant.
Stir up thy people ; oust him !

Gamel. And thy love ?

Aldwyth. As much as thou canst
bear.

Gamel. I can bear all,
And not be giddy.

Aldwyth. No more now ; to-mor-
row.

SCENE II

IN THE GARDEN. THE KING'S
HOUSE NEAR LONDON. SUNSET

Edith. Mad for thy mate, passion-
ate nightingale ! —

I love thee for it — ay, but stay a
moment ;

He can but stay a moment ; he is go-
ing.

I fain would hear him coming ! — near
me — near,

Somewhere — to draw him nearer with
a charm

Like thine to thine !

(*Singing.*)

Love is come with a song and a smile,
Welcome Love with a smile and a song.

Love can stay but a little while.

Why cannot he stay ? They call him away.

Ye do him wrong, ye do him wrong ; 11
Love will stay for a whole life long.

Enter HAROLD.

Harold. The nightingales in Ha-
vering-atte-Bower

Sang out their loves so loud that Edward's prayers
Were deafen'd and he pray'd them dumb, and thus
I dumb thee too, my wingless nightingale ! *[Kissing her.]*

Edith. Thou art my music ! Would their wings were mine
To follow thee to Flanders ! Must thou go ?

Harold. Not must, but will. It is but for one moon.

Edith. Leaving so many foes in Edward's hall ²⁰
To league against thy weal. The Lady Aldwyth
Was here to-day, and when she touch'd on thee
She stammer'd in her hate ; I am sure she hates thee,
Pants for thy blood.

Harold. Well, I have given her cause —
I fear no woman.

Edith. Hate not one who felt some pity for thy hater ! I am sure
Her morning wanted sunlight, she so praised

The convent and lone life — within the pale —

Beyond the passion. Nay — she held with Edward,

At least methought she held with holy Edward, ³⁰

That marriage was half sin.

Harold. A lesson worth finger and thumb — thus *(snaps his fingers)*.

And my answer to it —
See here — an interwoven H and E !
Take thou this ring ; I will demand his ward

From Edward when I come again.
Ay, would she ?

She to shut up my blossom in the dark !

Thou art my nun, thy cloister in mine arms.

Edith (taking the ring). Yea, but Earl Tostig —

Harold. That's a truer fear !
For if the North take fire, I should be back ;

I shall be, soon enough.

Edith. Ay, but last night

An evil dream that ever came and went —

Harold. A gnat that vexed thy pillow ! Had I been by,
I would have spoil'd his horn. My girl, what was it ?

Edith. O that thou wert not going !
For so methought it was our marriage-morn,

And while we stood together, a dead man

Rose from behind the altar, tore away My marriage ring, and rent my bridal veil ;

And then I turn'd, and saw the church all fill'd

With dead men upright from their graves, and all ⁵⁰

The dead men made at thee to murder thee.

But thou didst back thyself against a pillar,

And strike among them with thy battle-axe —

There, what a dream !

Harold. Well, well — a dream — no more !

Edith. Did not Heaven speak to men in dreams of old ?

Harold. Ay — well — of old. I tell thee what, my child ;

Thou hast misread this merry dream of thine.

Taken the rifted pillars of the wood For smooth stone columns of the sanctuary,

The shadows of a hundred fat dead deer ⁶⁰

For dead men's ghosts. True, that the battle-axe

Was out of place ; it should have been the bow. —

Come, thou shalt dream no more such dreams ; I swear it,

By mine own eyes — and these two sapphires — these

Twain rubies, that are amulets against all

The kisses of all kind of woman-kind

In Flanders, till the sea shall roll me back

To tumble at thy feet.

Edith. That would but shame me, Rather than make me vain. The sea may roll

Sand, shingle, shore-weed, not the living rock 70
Which guards the land.

Harold. Except it be a soft one,
And under-eaten to the fall. Mine amulet —

This last — upon thine eyelids, to shut in

A happier dream. Sleep, sleep, and thou shalt see

My greyhounds fleeting like a beam of light,

And hear my peregrine and her bells in heaven;

And other bells on earth, which yet are heaven's;

Guess what they be.

Edith. He cannot guess who knows.
Farewell, my king.

Harold. Not yet, but then — my queen. [*Exeunt.*]

Enter ALDWYTH from the thicket.

Aldwyth. The kiss that charms thine eyelids into sleep 80

Will hold mine waking. Hate him? I could love him

More, tenfold, than this fearful child can do;

Griffyth I hated; why not hate the foe

Of England? Griffyth, when I saw him flee,

Chased deer-like up his mountains, all the blood

That should have only pulsed for Griffyth beat

For his pursuer. I love him, or think I love him.

If he were King of England, I his queen,

I might be sure of it. Nay, I do love him. —

She must be cloister'd somehow, lest the king 90

Should yield his ward to Harold's will. What harm?

She hath but blood enough to live, not love. —

When Harold goes and Tostig, shall I play

The craftier Tostig with him? fawn upon him?

Chime in with all? 'O thou moresaint than king!'

And that were true enough. 'O blessed relics!'

'O Holy Peter!' If he found me thus, Harold might hate me; he is broad and honest,

Breathing an easy gladness — not like Aldwyth —

For which I strangely love him. Should not England 100

Love Aldwyth, if she stay the feuds that part

The sons of Godwin from the sons of Alfgar

By such a marrying? Courage, noble Aldwyth!

Let all thy people bless thee!

Our wild Tostig, Edward hath made him earl; he would be king.

The dog that snapt the shadow dropt the bone.

I trust he may do well, this Gamel, whom

I play upon, that he may play the note

Whereat the dog shall howl and run, and Harold

Hear the King's music, all alone with him, 110

Pronounced his heir of England. I see the goal and half the way to it. —

Peace-lover is our Harold for the sake Of England's wholeness — so — to

shake the North

With earthquake and disruption — some division —

Then fling mine own fair person in the gap

A sacrifice to Harold, a peace-offering, A scapegoat marriage — all the sins of both

The houses on mine head — then a fair life

And bless the Queen of England!

Morcar (coming from the thicket). Art thou assured 120

By this, that Harold loves but Edith? *Aldwyth.* Morcar!

Why creep'st thou like a timorous beast of prey

Out of the bush by night? *Morcar.* I follow'd thee.

Aldwyth. Follow my lead, and I will make thee earl.

Morcar. What lead then? *Aldwyth.* Thou shalt flash it secretly

Among the good Northumbrian folk,
that I —

That Harold loves me — yea, and presently

That I and Harold are betroth'd — and last —

Perchance that Harold wrongs me ;
tho' I would not 129

That it should come to that.

Morcar. I will both flash
And thunder for thee.

Aldwyth. I said 'secretly ;'
It is the flash that murders, the poor
thunder

Never harm'd head.

Morcar. But thunder may bring
down

That which the flash hath stricken.

Aldwyth. Down with Tostig!

That first of all. — And when doth
Harold go ?

Morcar. To-morrow — first to Bosham, then to Flanders.

Aldwyth. Not to come back till Tostig shall have shown

And reddend' with his people's blood
the teeth

That shall be broken by us — yea, and thou

Chair'd in his place. Good-night, and
dream thyself 140

Their chosen earl. [*Exit Aldwyth.*]

Morcar. Earl first, and after that
Who knows I may not dream myself
their king ?

ACT II

SCENE I. — SEASHORE. PONTIEU.
NIGHT.

HAROLD and his MEN, wrecked.

Harold. Friends, in that last inhospitable plunge
Our boat hath burst her ribs ; but ours
are whole ;

I have but bark'd my hands.

Attendant. I dug mine into
My old fast friend the shore, and clinging thus

Felt the remorseless outdraught of the
deep

Haul like a great strong fellow at my
legs.

And then I rose and ran. The blast
that came

So suddenly hath fallen as suddenly —
Put thou the comet and this blast together —

Harold. Put thou thyself and mother-wit together. 10

Be not a fool !

Enter FISHERMEN with torches, HAROLD going up to one of them, ROLF.

Wicked sea-will-o'-the-wisp !
Wolf of the shore ! dog, with thy lying
lights

Thou hast betray'd us on these rocks
of thine !

Rolf. Ay, but thou liest as loud as
the black herring-pond behind thee.
We be fishermen ; I came to see after
my nets.

Harold. To drag us into them. Fishermen ? devils !

Who, while ye fish for men with your
false fires,

Let the great devil fish for your own
souls. 20

Rolf. Nay then, we be liker the
blessed Apostles ; they were fishers of
men, Father Jean says.

Harold. I had liefer that the fish had
swallowed me,

Like Jonah, than have known there
were such devils.

What's to be done ?

[*To his Men — goes apart with them.*]

Fisherman. Rolf, what fish did swallow
Jonah ?

Rolf. A whale ! 29

Fisherman. Then a whale to a whelk
we have swallowed the King of England. I saw him over there. Look thee,
Rolf, when I was down in the fever,
she was down with the hunger, and
thou didst stand by her and give her
thy crabs, and set her up again, till
now, by the patient Saints, she's as
crabb'd as ever.

Rolf. And I'll give her my crabs
again, when thou art down again. 40

Fisherman. I thank thee, Rolf. Run
thou to Count Guy ; he is hard at
hand. Tell him what hath crept into
our creel, and he will fee thee as freely
as he will wrench this outlander's ransom
out of him — and why not ? for
what right had he to get himself
wrecked on another man's land ?

Rolf. Thou art the human-hearted-
est, Christian-charitiest of all crab-
catchers. Share and share alike! 51

[*Exit.*]

Harold (to Fisherman). Fellow, dost
thou catch crabs?

Fisherman. As few as I may in a
wind, and less than I would in a calm.
Ay!

Harold. I have a mind that thou
shalt catch no more.

Fisherman. How?

Harold. I have a mind to brain thee
with mine axe. 58

Fisherman. Ay, do, do, and our
great count-crab will make his nippers
meet in thine heart; he'll sweat it out
of thee, he'll sweat it out of thee!
Look, he's here! He'll speak for
himself. Hold thine own, if thou
canst!

Enter GUY, COUNT OF PONTIEU.

Harold. Guy, Count of Ponthieu?

Guy. Harold, Earl of Wessex!

Harold. Thy villains with their ly-
ing lights have wreck'd us!

Guy. Art thou not Earl of Wessex?

Harold. In mine earldom
A man may hang gold bracelets on a
bush,

And leave them for a year, and com-
ing back 70

Find them again.

Guy. Thou art a mighty man
In thine own earldom!

Harold. Were such murderous liars
In Wessex—if I caught them, they
should hang

Cliff-gibbeted for sea-marks, our sea-
mew

Winging their only wail!

Guy. Ay, but my men
Hold that the shipwreckt are accursed
of God;—

What hinders me to hold with mine
own men?

Harold. The Christian manhood of
the man who reigns!

Guy. Ay, rave thy worst, but in
our oubliettes

Thou shalt rot or ransom.—Hale him
hence! 80

[*To one of his Attendants.*]

Fly thou to William; tell him we
have Harold.

SCENE II

BAYEUX. PALACE

COUNT WILLIAM and WILLIAM
MALET.

William. We hold our Saxon wood-
cock in the springe,
But he begins to flutter. As I think
He was thine host in England when I
went

To visit Edward.

Malet. Yea, and there, my lord,
To make allowance for their rougher
fashions,

I found him all a noble host should be.

William. Thou art his friend. Thou
know'st my claim on England
Thro' Edward's promise. We have
him in the toils;

And it were well if thou shouldst let
him feel

How dense a fold of danger nets him
round, 10

So that he bristle himself against my
will.

Malet. What would I do, my lord,
if I were you?

William. What wouldst thou do?

Malet. My lord, he is thy guest.

William. Nay, by the splendor of
God, no guest of mine.

He came not to see me, had past me by
To hunt and hawk elsewhere, save
for the fate

Which hunted him when that un-
Saxon blast,

And bolts of thunder moulded in high
heaven

To serve the Norman purpose, drave
and crack'd

His boat on Ponthieu beach; where
our friend Guy 20

Had wrung his ransom from him by
the rack,

But that I stept between and pur-
chased him,

Translating his captivity from Guy
To mine own hearth at Bayeux, where

he sits
My ransom'd prisoner.

Malet. Well, if not with gold,
With golden deeds and iron strokes
that brought

Thy war with Brittany to a goodlier close

Than else had been, he paid his ransom back.

William. So that henceforth they are not like to league 29

With Harold against me.

Malet. A marvel, how He from the liquid sands of Coesnon Haled thy shore-swallow'd, armor'd Normans up

To fight for thee again!

William. Perchance against Their savor, save thou save him from himself.

Malet. But I should let him home again, my lord.

William. Simple! let fly the bird within the hand,

To catch the bird again within the bush!

No.

Smooth thou my way, before he clash with me;

I want his voice in England for the crown, 40

I want thy voice with him to bring him round;

And being brave he must be subtly cow'd,

And being truthful wrought upon to swear

Vows that he dare not break. England our own

Thro' Harold's help, he shall be my dear friend

As well as thine, and thou thyself shalt have

Large lordship there of lands and territory.

Malet. I knew thy purpose; he and Wulfnoth never

Have met, except in public; shall they meet

In private? I have often talk'd with Wulfnoth, 50

And stuff'd the boy with fears, that these may act

On Harold when they meet.

William. Then let them meet!

Malet. I can but love this noble, honest Harold.

William. Love him! why not? thine is a loving office,

I have commission'd thee to save the man.

Help the good ship, showing the sunken rock,

Or he is wreckt for ever.

Enter WILLIAM RUFUS.

William Rufus. Father.

William. Well, boy.

William Rufus. They have taken away the toy thou gavest me,

The Norman knight.

William. Why, boy?

William Rufus. Because I broke The horse's leg—it was mine own to break; 60

I like to have my toys, and break them too.

William. Well, thou shalt have another Norman knight.

William Rufus. And may I break his legs?

William. Yea,—get thee gone!

William Rufus. I'll tell them I have had my way with thee.

[Exit.]

Malet. I never knew thee check thy will for aught

Save for the prattling of thy little ones.

William. Who shall be kings of England. I am heir

Of England by the promise of her king.

Malet. But there the great Assembly choose their king.

The choice of England is the voice of England. 70

William. I will be King of England by the laws,

The choice, and voice of England.

Malet. Can that be?

William. The voice of any people is the sword

That guards them, or the sword that beats them down.

Here comes the would-be what I will be—kinglike . . .

Tho' scarce at ease; for, save our meshes break,

More kinglike he than like to prove a king.

Enter HAROLD, musing, with his eyes on the ground.

He sees me not—and yet he dreams of me.

Earl, wilt thou fly my falcons this fair day?

They are of the best, strong-wing'd against the wind. 80

Harold (looking up suddenly, having caught but the last word). Which way does it blow?

William. Blowing for England, ha? Not yet. Thou hast not learnt thy quarters here.

The winds so cross and jostle among these towers.

Harold. Count of the Normans, thou hast ransom'd us,

Maintain'd, and entertain'd us royally!

William. And thou for us hast fought as loyally,
Which binds us friendship-fast for ever!

Harold. Good!

But lest we turn the scale of courtesy
By too much pressure on it, I would fain,

Since thou hast promised Wulfnoth home with us, 90

Be home again with Wulfnoth.

William. Stay — as yet
Thou hast but seen how Norman hands can strike,

But walk'd our Norman field, scarce touch'd or tasted

The splendors of our court.

Harold. I am in no mood;
I should be as the shadow of a cloud
Crossing your light.

William. Nay, rest a week or two.
And we will fill thee full of Norman sun,
And send thee back among thine island mists

With laughter.

Harold. Count, I thank thee, but had rather

Breathe the free wind from off our Saxon downs, 100

Tho' charged with all the wet of all the west.

William. Why if thou wilt, so let it be — thou shalt.

That were a graceless hospitality
To chain the free guest to the banquet-board;

To-morrow we will ride with thee to Harfleur,

And see thee shipt, and pray in thy behalf

For happier homeward winds than that which crack'd

Thy bark at Ponthieu, — yet to us, in faith,

A happy one — whereby we came to know

Thy valor and thy value, noble earl. 110

Ay, and perchance a happy one for thee,

Provided — I will go with thee to-morrow —

Nay — but there be conditions, easy ones,

So thou, fair friend, will take them easily.

Enter PAGE.

Page. My lord, there is a post from over seas

With news for thee. [*Exit Page.*

William. Come, Malet, let us hear!
[*Exeunt Count William and Malet.*

Harold. Conditions? What conditions? pay him back

His ransom? 'easy' — that were easy — nay —

No money-lover he! What said the king?

I pray you do not go to Normandy.' And fate hath blown me hither, bound me too 121

With bitter obligation to the Count — Have I not fought it out? What did he mean?

There lodged a gleaming grimness in his eyes,

Gave his shorn smile the lie. The walls oppress me,

And yon huge keep that hinders half the heaven.

Free air! free field!

Moves to go out. A Man-at-arms follows him.

Harold (to the Man-at-arms). I need thee not. Why dost thou follow me?

Man-at-arms. I have the Count's commands to follow thee.

Harold. What then? Am I in danger in this court? 130

Man-at-arms. I cannot tell. I have the Count's commands.

Harold. Stand out of earshot then, and keep me still

In eyeshot.

Man-at-arms. Yea, lord Harold.

Harold. And arm'd men [*Withdraws.*

Ever keep watch beside my chamber door,

And if I walk within the lonely wood,
There is an arm'd man ever glides be-
hind !

Enter MALET.

Why am I follow'd, haunted, harass'd,
watch'd ?

See yonder !

[*Pointing to the Man-at-arms.*

Malet. 'T is the good Count's care
for thee !

The Normans love thee not, nor thou
the Normans,

Or — so they deem.

Harold. But wherefore is the wind,
Which way soever the vane-arrow
swing,

Not ever fair for England ? Why, but
now

He said — thou heard'st him — that I
must not hence

Save on conditions.

Malet. So in truth he said.

Harold. Malet, thy mother was an
Englishwoman ;

There somewhere beats an English
pulse in thee !

Malet. Well — for my mother's sake
I love your England,

But for my father I love Normandy.

Harold. Speak for thy mother's
sake, and tell me true.

Malet. Then for my mother's sake,
and England's sake

That suffers in the daily want of thee,
Obey the Count's conditions, my good
friend.

Harold. How, Malet, if they be not
honorable !

Malet. Seem to obey them.

Harold. Better die than lie !

Malet. Choose therefore whether
thou wilt have thy conscience

White as a maiden's hand, or whether
England

Be shatter'd into fragments.

Harold. News from England ?

Malet. Morcar and Edwin have
stirr'd up the thanes

Against thy brother Tostig's govern-
ance ;

And all the North of Humber is one
storm.

Harold. I should be there, Malet, I
should be there !

Malet. And Tostig in his own hall
on suspicion

Hath massacred the thane that was
his guest,
Gamel, the son of Orm ; and there be
more

As villainously slain.

Harold. The wolf ! the beast !
Ill news for guests, ha, Malet ! More ?

What more ?

What do they say ? did Edward know
of this ?

Malet. They say his wife was know-
ing and abetting.

Harold. They say his wife ! — To
marry and have no husband
Makes the wife fool. My God, I
should be there !

I'll hack my way to the sea.

Malet. Thou canst not, Harold ;
Our duke is all between thee and the
sea,

Our duke is all about thee like a God ;
All passes block'd. Obey him, speak
him fair,

For he is only debonair to those
That follow where he leads, but stark
as death

To those that cross him. — Look thou,
here is Wulfnoth !

I leave thee to thy talk with him
alone ;

How wan, poor lad ! how sick and sad
for home !

[*Exit Malet.*
Harold (muttering). Go not to Nor-
mandy !

Enter WULFNOTH.

Poor brother ! still a hostage !

Wulfnoth. Yea, and I
Shall see the dewy kiss of dawn no
more

Make blush the maiden-white of our
tall cliffs,

Nor mark the sea-bird rouse himself
and hover

Above the windy ripple, and fill the
sky

With free sea-laughter — never — save
indeed

Thou canst make yield this iron-
mooded duke

To let me go.

Harold. Why, brother, so he will ;
But on conditions. Canst thou guess
at them ?

Wulfnoth. Draw nearer, — I was in
the corridor,

I saw him coming with his brother
Odo

The Bayeux bishop, and I hid myself.

Harold. They did thee wrong who
made thee hostage; thou

Wast ever fearful.

Wulfnoth. And he spoke — I heard
him —

'This Harold is not of the royal blood,
Can have no right to the crown;' and
Odo said,

'Thine is the right, for thine the might;
he is here,

And yonder is thy keep.'

Harold. No, Wulfnoth, no!

Wulfnoth. And William laugh'd
and swore that might was right,

Far as he knew in this poor world of
ours — 200

'Marry, the Saints must go along
with us,

And, brother, we will find a way,' said
he —

Yea, yea, he would be King of Eng-
land.

Harold. Never!

Wulfnoth. Yea, but thou must not
this way answer him.

Harold. Is it not better still to speak
the truth?

Wulfnoth. Not here, or thou wilt
never hence nor I;

For in the racing toward this golden
goal

He turns not right or left, but tram-
ples flat

Whatever thwarts him; hast thou
never heard

His savagery at Alençon, — the town
Hung out raw hides along their walls,
and cried, 211

'Work for the tanner.'

Harold. That had anger'd me
Had I been William.

Wulfnoth. Nay, but he had prison-
ers,

He tore their eyes out, sliced their
hands away,

And flung them streaming o'er the
battlements

Upon the heads of those who walk'd
within —

O, speak him fair, Harold, for thine
own sake!

Harold. Your Welshman says, 'The
Truth against the World,'

Much more the truth against myself.

Wulfnoth. Thyself?

But for my sake, O brother! O, for
my sake! 220

Harold. Poor Wulfnoth! do they
not entreat thee well?

Wulfnoth. I see the blackness of
my dungeon loom

Across their lamps of revel, and be-
yond

The merriest murmurs of their ban-
quet clank

The shackles that will bind me to the
wall.

Harold. Too fearful still.

Wulfnoth. O, no, no — speak him
fair!

Call it to temporize, and not to lie;

Harold, I do not counsel thee to
lie.

The man that hath to foil a murder-
ous aim

May, surely, play with words.

Harold. Words are the man.

Not even for thy sake, brother, would
I lie. 231

Wulfnoth. Then for thine Edith?

Harold. There thou prick'st me
deep.

Wulfnoth. And for our Mother
England?

Harold. Deeper still.

Wulfnoth. And deeper still the
deep-down oubliette,

Down thirty feet below the smiling
day —

In blackness — dogs' food thrown up-
on thy head.

And over thee the suns arise and set,
And the lark sings, the sweet stars

come and go,
And men are at their markets, in their

fields,
And woo their loves and have forgot-
ten thee; 240

And thou art upright in thy living
grave,

Where there is barely room to shift
thy side,

And all thine England hath forgotten
thee;

And he our lazy-pious Norman King,
With all his Normans round him once

again,
Counts his old beads, and hath forgot
ten thee.

Harold. Thou art of my blood, and
so methinks, my boy,
Thy fears infect me beyond reason.
Peace!

Wulfnoth. And then our fiery
Tostig, while thy hands
Are palsied here, if his Northumbrians
rise 250

And hurl him from them, — I have
heard the Normans
Count upon this confusion — may he
not make

A league with William, so to bring
him back?

Harold. That lies within the sha-
dow of the chance.

Wulfnoth. And like a river in flood
thro' a burst dam
Descends the ruthless Norman — our
good King

Kneels mumbling some old bone —
our helpless folk

Are wash'd away, wailing, in their
own blood —

Harold. Wailing! not warring?
Boy, thou hast forgotten
That thou art English.

Wulfnoth. Then our modest wo-
men — 260
I know the Norman license — thine
own Edith —

Harold. No more! I will not hear
thee — William comes.

Wulfnoth. I dare not well be seen
in talk with thee.
Make thou not mention that I spake
with thee.

[*Moves away to the back of the stage.*]

*Enter WILLIAM, MALET, and OFFI-
CERS.*

Officer. We have the man that
rail'd against thy birth.

William. Tear out his tongue.

Officer. He shall not rail again.
As said that he should see confusion
fall

On thee and on thine house.

William. Tear out his eyes,
And plunge him into prison.

Officer. It shall be done.

[*Exit Officer.*]

William. Look not amazed, fair
earl! Better leave undone 270
Than do by halves — tongueless and
eyeless, prison'd —

Harold. Better methinks have slain
the man at once!

William. We have respect for
man's immortal soul,
We seldom take man's life, except in
war;

It frights the traitor more to maim
and blind.

Harold. In mine own land I should
have scorn'd the man,
Or lash'd his rascal back, and let him
go.

William. And let him go? To
slander thee again!
Yet in thine own land in thy father's
day

They blinded my young kinsman, Al-
fred — ay, 280
Some said it was thy father's deed.

Harold. They lied.

William. But thou and he — whom
at thy word, for thou
Art known a speaker of the truth, I
free

From this foul charge —

Harold. Nay, nay, he freed himself
By oath and compurgation from the
charge.

The King, the lords, the people clear'd
him of it.

William. But thou and he drove
our good Normans out
From England, and this rankles in us
yet.

Archbishop Robert hardly escaped
with life.

Harold. Archbishop Robert! Ro-
bert the Archbishop! 290
Robert of Jumièges, he that —

Malet. Quiet! quiet!

Harold. Count! if there sat with-
in the Norman chair
A ruler all for England — one who
fill'd

All offices, all bishoprics with Eng-
lish —

We could not move from Dover to the
Humber

Saving thro' Norman bishoprics — I
say

Ye would applaud that Norman who
should drive

The stranger to the fiends!

William. Why, that is reason!
Warrior thou art, and mighty wise
withal!

Ay, ay, but many among our Norman lords ³⁰⁰

Hate thee for this, and press upon me — saying

God and the sea have given thee to our hands

To plunge thee into lifelong prison here; —

Yet I hold out against them, as I may, Yea — would hold out, yea, tho' they should revolt —

For thou hast done the battle in my cause.

I am thy fastest friend in Normandy.

Harold. I am doubly bound to thee — if this be so.

William. And I would bind thee more, and would myself ³⁰⁹

Be bounden to thee more.

Harold. Then let me hence With Wulfnoth to King Edward.

William. So we will.

We hear he hath not long to live.

Harold. It may be.

William. Why then, the heir of England, who is he?

Harold. The Atheling is nearest to the throne.

William. But sickly, slight, half-witted and a child,

Will England have him king?

Harold. It may be, no.

William. And hath King Edward not pronounced his heir?

Harold. Not that I know.

William. When he was here in Normandy,

He loved us and we him, because we found him

A Norman of the Normans.

Harold. So did we.

William. A gentle, gracious, pure and saintly man! ³²¹

And grateful to the hand that shielded him,

He promised that if ever he were king

In England, he would give his kingly voice

To me as his successor. Knowest thou this?

Harold. I learn it now.

William. Thou knowest I am his cousin,

And that my wife descends from Alfred?

Harold. Ay.

William. Who hath a better claim then to the crown?

So that ye will not crown the Atheling?

Harold. None that I know — if that but hung upon ³³⁰

King Edward's will.

William. Wilt thou uphold my claim?

Malet (aside to Harold). Be careful of thine answer, my good friend.

Wulfnoth (aside to Harold). O Harold, for my sake and for thine own!

Harold. Ay . . . if the King have not revoked his promise.

William. But hath he done it then?

Harold. Not that I know.

William. Good, good, and thou wilt help me to the crown?

Harold. Ay — if the Witan will consent to this.

William. Thou art the mightiest voice in England, man,

Thy voice will lead the Witan — shall I have it? ³³⁹

Wulfnoth (aside to Harold). O Harold, if thou love thine Edith, ay.

Harold. Ay, if —

Malet (aside to Harold). Thine 'ifs' will sear thine eyes out — ay.

William. I ask thee, wilt thou help me to the crown?

And I will make thee my great earl of earls,

Foremost in England and in Normandy;

Thou shalt be verily king — all but the name —

For I shall most sojourn in Normandy; And thou be my vice-king in England.

Speak.

Wulfnoth (aside to Harold). Ay, brother — for the sake of England — ay.

Harold. My lord —

Malet (aside to Harold). Take heed now.

Harold. Ay.

William. I am content, For thou art truthful, and thy word

thy bond. ³⁵⁰

To-morrow will we ride with thee to Harfeur. [*Exit William*]

Malet. Harold, I am thy friend,
one life with thee,
And even as I should bless thee sav-
ing mine,
I thank thee now for having saved
thyself. [*Exit Malet.*]

Harold. For having lost myself to
save myself,
Said 'ay' when I meant 'no,' lied like
a lad

That dreads the pendent scourge, said
'ay' for 'no'!

Ay! No! — he hath not bound me by
an oath —

Is 'ay' an oath? is 'ay' strong as an
oath?

Or is it the same sin to break my word
As break mine oath? He call'd my
word my bond! ³⁶¹

He is a liar who knows I am a liar,
And makes believe that he believes
my word —

The crime be on his head — not
bounden — no.

[*Suddenly doors are flung open,
discovering in an inner hall
Count William in his state robes,
seated upon his throne between
two Bishops, Odo of Bayeux
being one; in the centre of the
hall an ark covered with cloth of
gold, and on either side of it the
Norman Barons.*]

*Enter a JAILOR before WILLIAM'S
throne.*

William (to Jailor). Knave, hast
thou let thy prisoner scape?

Jailor. Sir Count,
He had but one foot, he must have hopt
away,

Yea, some familiar spirit must have
help'd him.

William. Woe, knave, to thy fa-
miliar and to thee!

Give me thy keys.

[*They fall clashing.*]

Nay, let them lie. Stand there and
wait my will. ³⁷⁰

[*The Jailor stands aside.*]

William (to Harold). Hast thou
such trustless jailors in thy
North?

Harold. We have few prisoners in
mine earldom there,
So less chance for false keepers.

William. We have heard

Of thy just, mild, and equal govern-
ance;

Honor to thee! thou art perfect in all
honor!

Thy naked word thy bond! confirm
it now

Before our gather'd Norman baronage,
For they will not believe thee — as I
believe.

[*Descends from his throne and
stands by the ark.*]

Let all men here bear witness of our
bond!

[*Beckons to Harold, who advances.
Enter MALET behind him.*]

Lay thou thy hand upon this golden
pall! ³⁸⁰

Behold the jewel of Saint Pancratius
Woven into the gold. Swear thou on
this!

Harold. What should I swear?
Why should I swear on this?

William (savagely). Swear thou to
help me to the crown of Eng-
land.

Malet (whispering Harold). My
friend, thou hast gone too far
to palter now.

Wulfnoth (whispering Harold).
Swear thou to-day, to-morrow
is thine own.

Harold. I swear to help thee to the
crown of England

According as King Edward promises.

William. Thou must swear abso-
lutely, noble earl.

Malet (whispering). Delay is death
to thee, ruin to England. ³⁹⁰

Wulfnoth (whispering). Swear,
dearest brother, I beseech thee,
swear!

*Harold (putting his hand on the
jewel).* I swear to help thee to
the crown of England.

William. Thanks, truthful earl; I
did not doubt thy word,

But that my barons might believe thy
word,

And that the Holy Saints of Normandy
When thou art home in England, with
thine own,

Might strengthen thee in keeping of
thy word,

I made thee swear. Show him by
whom he hath sworn.

[*The two Bishops advance, and*

raise the cloth of gold. The bodies and bones of Saints are seen lying in the ark.

The holy bones of all the canonized
From all the holiest shrines in Normandy!⁴⁰⁰

Harold. Horrible!

[They let the cloth fall again.]

William. Ay, for thou hast sworn an oath

Which, if not kept, would make the hard earth rive

To the very devil's horns, the bright sky cleave

To the very feet of God, and send her hosts

Of injured Saints to scatter sparks of plague

Thro' all your cities, blast your infants, dash

The torch of war among your standing corn,

Dabble your hearths with your own blood. — Enough!

Thou wilt not break it! I, the count — the king

Thy friend — am grateful for thine honest oath,⁴¹⁰

Not coming fiercely like a conqueror, now,

But softly as a bridegroom to his own. For I shall rule according to your laws,

And make your ever-jarring earldoms move

To music and in order — Angle, Jute, Dane, Saxon, Norman, help to build a throne

Out-towering hers of France. — The wind is fair

For England now. To-night we will be merry.

To-morrow will I ride with thee to Harfleur.

[Exeunt William and all the Norman Barons, etc.]

Harold. To-night we will be merry — and to-morrow —⁴²⁰

Juggler and bastard — bastard — he hates that most —

William the tanner's bastard! Would he heard me!

O God, that I were in some wide, waste field

With nothing but my battle-axe and him

To spatter his brains! Why, let earth rive, gulf in

These cursed Normans — yea, and mine own self!

Cleave heaven, and send thy Saints that I may say

Even to their faces, 'If ye side with William

Ye are not noble!' How their pointed fingers

Glared at me! Am I Harold, Harold, son⁴³⁰

Of our great Godwin? Lo! I touch mine arms,

My limbs — they are not mine — they are a liar's —

I mean to be a liar — I am not bound — Stigand shall give me absolution for it —

Did the chest move? did it move? I am utter craven!

O Wulfnoth, Wulfnoth, brother, thou hast betray'd me!

Wulfnoth. Forgive me, brother, I will live here and die.

Enter PAGE.

Page. My lord! the duke awaits thee at the banquet.

Harold. Where they eat dead men's flesh, and drink their blood.

Page. My lord —⁴⁴⁰

Harold. I know your Norman cookery is so spiced,

It masks all this.

Page. My lord! thou art white as death.

Harold. With looking on the dead. Am I so white?

Thy duke will seem the darker. Hence, I follow. *[Exeunt.]*

ACT III

SCENE I. — THE KING'S PALACE. LONDON

KING EDWARD, *dying on a couch, and by him standing the QUEEN, HAROLD, ARCHBISHOP STIGAND, GURTH, LEOFWIN, ARCHBISHOP ALDRED, ALDWYTH, and EDITH.*

Stigand. Sleeping or dying there? If this be death,

Then our great Council wait to crown thee king —

Come hither, I have a power;

[To Harold.

They call me near, for I am close to thee

And England—I, old shrivell'd Stigand, I,

Dry as an old wood-fungus on a dead tree,

I have a power!

See here this little key about my neck!
There lies a treasure buried down in Ely.

If e'er the Norman grow too hard for thee,

Ask me for this at thy most need, son Harold,

At thy most need—not sooner.

Harold. So I will.

Stigand. Red gold—a hundred purses—yea, and more!

If thou canst make a wholesome use of these

To chink against the Norman, I do believe

My old crook'd spine would bud out two young wings

To fly to heaven straight with.

Harold. Thank thee, father!
Thou art English, Edward too is English now,

He hath clean repented of his Normanism.

Stigand. Ay, as the libertine repents who cannot

Make done undone, when thro' his dying sense

Shrills, 'Lost thro' thee!' They have built their castles here;

Our priories are Norman; the Norman adder

Hath bitten us; we are poison'd; our dear England

Is demi-Norman. He!—

[Pointing to King Edward, sleeping.

Harold. I would I were As holy and as passionless as he!

That I might rest as calmly! Look at him—

The rosy face, and long down-silvering beard,

The brows unwrinkled as a summer mere.—

Stigand. A summer mere with sudden wreckful gusts

From a side-gorge. Passionless? How he flamed

When Tostig's anger'd earldom flung him, nay,

He fain had calcin'd all Northumbria To one black ash, but that thy patriot

passion, Siding with our great Council against

Tostig, Out-passion'd his! Holy? ay, ay, for-sooth,

A conscience for his own soul, not his realm;

A twilight conscience lighted thro' a chink;

Thine by the sun; nay, by some sun to be,

When all the world hath learnt to speak the truth,

And lying were self-murder by that State

Which was the exception.

Harold. That sun may God speed!

Stigand. Come, Harold, shake the cloud off!

Harold. 'Can I, father? Our Tostig parted cursing me and

England;

Our sister hates us for his banishment; He hath gone to kindle Norway against

England, And Wulfnoth is alone in Normandy.

For when I rode with William down to Harfleur,

'Wulfnoth is sick,' he said; 'he cannot follow';

Then with that friendly-fiendly smile of his,

'We have learnt to love him, let him a little longer

Remain a hostage for the loyalty Of Godwin's house.' As far as touches

Wulfnoth I that so prized plain word and naked truth

Have sinn'd against it—all in vain.

Leofwin. Good brother, By all the truths that ever priest hath

preach'd, Of all the lies that ever men have lied, Thine is the pardonablest.

Harold. Maybe so! I think it so, I think I am a fool

To think it can be otherwise than so.

Stigand. Tut, tut, I have absolved thee. Dost thou scorn me, Because I had my Canterbury pallium

From one whom they disposed ?

Harold. No, Stigand, no !

Stigand. Is naked truth actable in true life ?

I have heard a saying of thy father Godwin,

That, were a man of state nakedly true,

Men would but take him for the craftier liar.

Leofwin. Be men less delicate than the devil himself ?

I thought that naked Truth would shame the devil,

The devil is so modest.

Gurth. He never said it !

Leofwin. Be thou not stupid-honest, brother Gurth !

Harold. Better to be a liar's dog, and hold

My master honest, than believe that lying

And ruling men are fatal twins that cannot

Move one without the other. Edward wakes !—

Dazed — he hath seen a vision.

Edward. The green tree !

Then a great Angel past along the highest

Crying, 'The doom of England !' and at once

He stood beside me, in his grasp a sword

Of lightnings, wherewithal he cleft the tree

From off the bearing trunk, and hurl'd it from him

Three fields away, and then he dash'd and drench'd,

He dyed, he soak'd the trunk with human blood,

And brought the sunder'd tree again, and set it

Straight on the trunk, that, thus baptized in blood,

Grew ever high and higher, beyond my seeing,

And shot out sidelong boughs across the deep

That dropt themselves, and rooted in far isles

Beyond my seeing ; and the great Angel rose

And past again along the highest, crying,

'The doom of England !' — Tostig raise my head !

[*Falls back senseless.*]

Harold (raising him). Let Harold serve for Tostig !

Queen. Harold served

Tostig so ill, he cannot serve for Tostig !

Ay, raise his head, for thou hast laid it low !

The sickness of our saintly King, for whom

My prayers go up as fast as my tears fall,

I well believe, hath mainly drawn itself

From lack of Tostig — thou hast banish'd him.

Harold. Nay — but the Council, and the King himself.

Queen. Thou hatest him, hatest him !

Harold (coldly). Ay — Stigand, unriddle

This vision, canst thou ?

Stigand. Dotage !

Edward (starting up). It is finish'd.

I have built the Lord a house — the Lord hath dwelt

In darkness. I have built the Lord a house —

Palms, flowers, pomegranates, golden cherubim

With twenty-cubit wings from wall to wall —

I have built the Lord a house — sing, Asaph ! clash

The cymbal, Heman ! blow the trumpet, priest !

Fall, cloud, and fill the house — lo ! my two pillars,

Jacin and Boaz !

[*Seeing Harold and Gurth.*]

Harold, Gurth, — where am I ?

Where is the charter of our Westminster ?

Stigand. It lies beside thee, king, upon thy bed.

Edward. Sign, sign at once — take, sign it, Stigand, Aldred !

Sign it, my good son Harold, Gurth, and Leofwin !

Sign it, my Queen !

All. We have sign'd it.

Edward. It is finish'd !

The kingliest abbey in all Christian lands,

The lordliest, loftiest minster ever
built

To Holy Peter in our English isle !
Let me be buried there, and all our
kings,

And all our just and wise and holy
men

That shall be born hereafter. It is
finish'd ! 120

Hast thou had absolution for thine
oath ? [To Harold.

Harold. Stigand hath given me ab-
solution for it.

Edward. Stigand is not canonical
enough

To save thee from the wrath of Nor-
man Saints.

Stigand. Norman enough ! Be there
no Saints of England

To help us from their brethren yonder ?

Edward. Prelate,
The Saints are one, but those of Nor-
manland

Are mightier than our own. — Ask it
of Aldred. [To Harold.

Aldred. It shall be granted him, my
king ; for he

Who vows a vow to strangle his own
mother 130

Is guiltier keeping this than breaking
it.

Edward. O friends, I shall not over-
live the day !

Stigand. Why, then the throne is
empty. Who inherits ?

For tho' we be not bound by the king's
voice

In making of a king, yet the king's
voice

Is much toward his making. Who
inherits ?

Edgar the Atheling ?

Edward. No, no, but Harold.
I love him ; he hath served me ; none
but he

Can rule all England. Yet the curse
is on him

For swearing falsely by those blessed
bones ; 140

He did not mean to keep his vow.

Harold. Not mean
To make our England Norman.

Edward. There spake Godwin,
Who hated all the Normans ; but their
Saints

Have heard thee, Harold.

Edith. O, my lord, my King !
He knew not whom he swore by.

Edward. Yea, I know
He knew not, but those heavenly ears
have heard,

Their curse is on him ; wilt thou bring
another,

Edith, upon his head ?

Edith. No, no, not I !

Edward. Why, then thou must not
wed him.

Harold. Wherefore, wherefore ?

Edward. O son, when thou didst
tell me of thine oath, 150

I sorrow'd for my random promise
given

To yon fox-lion. I did not dream then
I should be king. — My son, the Saints
are virgins ;

They love the white rose of virginity,
The cold, white lily blowing in her
cell.

I have been myself a virgin : and I
sware

To consecrate my virgin here to Hea-
ven —

The silent, cloister'd, solitary life,
A life of lifelong prayer against the
curse

That lies on thee and England.

Harold. No, no, no !

Edward. Treble denial of the tongue
of flesh, 161

Like Peter's when he fell, and thou
wilt have

To wail for it like Peter. O my son !
Are all oaths to be broken then, all
promises

Made in our agony for help from Hea-
ven ?

Son, there is one who loves thee ; and
a wife.

What matters who, so she be service-
able

In all obedience, as mine own hath
been ?

God bless thee, wedded daughter !

[Laying his hand on the Queen's
head.

Queen. Bless thou too
That brother whom I love beyond the
rest, 170

My banish'd Tostig.

Edward. All the sweet Saints bless
him !

Spare and forbear him, Harold, if he comes!
 And let him pass unscathed; he loves me, Harold!
 Be kindly to the Normans left among us,
 Who follow'd me for love! and dear son, swear
 When thou art king, to see my solemn vow
 Accomplish'd.

Harold. Nay, dear lord, for I have sworn
 Not to swear falsely twice.

Edward. Thou wilt not swear?

Harold. I cannot.

Edward. Then on thee remains the curse,
 Harold, if thou embrace her; and on thee,
 Edith, if thou abide it, —

[*The King swoons; Edith falls and kneels by the couch.*]

Stigand. He hath swoon'd.
 Death? — no, as yet a breath.

Harold. Look up! look up!
 Edith!

Aldred. Confuse her not; she hath begun
 Her lifelong prayer for thee.

Aldwyth. O noble Harold,
 I would thou couldst have sworn.

Harold. For thine own pleasure?

Aldwyth. No, but to please our dying King, and those
 Who make thy good their own — all England, earl.

Aldred. I would thou couldst have sworn. Our holy King
 Hath given his virgin lamb to Holy Church

To save thee from the curse.
Harold. Alas! poor man,
 His promise brought it on me.

Aldred. O good son!
 That knowledge made him all the carefuller

To find a means whereby the curse might glance
 From thee and England.

Harold. Father, we so loved —

Aldred. The more the love, the mightier is the prayer;
 The more the love, the more acceptable

The sacrifice of both your loves to Heaven.

No sacrifice to Heaven, no help from Heaven;

That runs thro' all the faiths of all the world.

And sacrifice there must be, for the King

Is holy, and hath talk'd with God, and seen

A shadowing horror; there are signs in heaven —

Harold. Your comet came and went.

Aldred. And signs on earth!

Knowest thou Senlac hill?

Harold. I know all Sussex;
 A good entrenchment for a perilous hour!

Aldred. Pray God that come not suddenly! There is one
 Who passing by that hill three nights ago —

He shook so that he scarce could out with it —

Heard, heard —

Harold. The wind in his hair?

Aldred. A ghostly horn
 Blowing continually, and faint battle-hymns,

And cries, and clashes, and the groans of men;

And dreadful shadows strove upon the hill,

And dreadful lights crept up from out the marsh —

Corpse-candles gliding over nameless graves —

Harold. At Senlac?

Aldred. Senlac.

Edward (waking). Senlac! Sanguelac,

The Lake of Blood!

Stigand. This lightning before death

Plays on the word, — and Normanizes too!

Harold. Hush, father, hush!

Edward. Thou uncanonical fool,
 Wilt thou play with the thunder?
 North and South

Thunder together, showers of blood are blown

Before a never-ending blast, and hiss
 Against the blaze they cannot quench — a lake.

A sea of blood — we are drown'd in
 blood — for God
 Has fill'd the quiver, and Death has
 drawn the bow —
 Sanguelac! Sanguelac! the arrow!
 the arrow! [Dies.
Stigand. It is the arrow of death in
 his own heart —
 And our great Council wait to crown
 thee King.

SCENE II

IN THE GARDEN. THE KING'S HOUSE
 NEAR LONDON

Edith. Crown'd, crown'd and lost,
 crown'd King — and lost to
 me!

(Singing.)

Two young lovers in winter weather,
 None to guide them,
 Walk'd at night on the misty heather;
 Night, as black as a raven's feather;
 Both were lost and found together,
 • None beside them.

That is the burthen of it — lost and
 found
 Together in the cruel river Swale
 A hundred years ago; and there's an-
 other, 10

Lost, lost, the light of day,

To which the lover answers lovingly:

'I am beside thee.'
 Lost, lost, we have lost the way.
 'Love, I will guide thee.'
 Whither, O whither? into the river,
 Where we two may be lost together,
 And lost for ever? 'O, never! O, never!
 Tho' we be lost and be found together.'

Some think they loved within the
 pale forbidden 20
 By Holy Church; but who shall say?
 the truth
 Was lost in that fierce North, where
 they were lost,
 Where all good things are lost, where
 Tostig lost
 The good hearts of his people. It is
 Harold!

Enter HAROLD.

Harold the King!

Harold. Call me not King, but
 Harold.

Edith. Nay, thou art King!

Harold. Thine, thine, or King or
 churl!

My girl, thou hast been weeping;
 turn not thou

Thy face away, but rather let me be
 King of the moment to thee, and com-
 mand

That kiss my due when subject, which
 will make 30

My kingship kinglier to me than to
 reign

King of the world without it.

Edith. Ask me not,
 Lest I should yield it, and the second
 curse

Descend upon thine head, and thou
 be only

King of the moment over England.

Harold. Edith,
 Tho' somewhat less a king to my true
 self

Than ere they crown'd me one, for I
 have lost

Somewhat of upright stature thro'
 mine oath,

Yet thee I would not lose, and sell
 not thou

Our living passion for a dead man's
 dream; 40

Stigand believed he knew not what
 he spake.

O God! I cannot help it, but at
 times

They seem to me too narrow, all the
 faiths

Of this grown world of ours, whose
 baby eye

Saw them sufficient. Fool and wise,
 I fear

This curse, and scorn it. But a little
 light! —

And on it falls the shadow of the
 priest;

Heaven yield us more! for better,
 Woden, all

Our cancell'd warrior-gods, our grim
 Walhalla,

Eternal war, than that the Saints at
 peace, 50

The Holiest of our Holiest One, should
 be

This William's fellow-tricksters;—
better die

Than credit this, for death is death,
or else

Lifts us beyond the lie. Kiss me—
thou art not

A holy sister yet, my girl, to fear
There might be more than brother in
my kiss,

And more than sister in thine own.

Edith. I dare not.

Harold. Scared by the church—
'Love for a whole life long.'

When was that sung?

Edith. Here to the nightingales.

Harold. Their anthems of no church,
how sweet they are! 60

Nor kingly priest, nor priestly king
to cross

Their billings ere they nest.

Edith. They are but of spring.
They fly the winter change—not so
with us—

No wings to come and go.

Harold. But wing'd souls flying
Beyond all change and in the eternal
distance

To settle on the Truth.

Edith. They are not so true,
They change their mates.

Harold. Do they? I did not know
it.

Edith. They say thou art to wed
the Lady Aldwyth.

Harold. They say, they say!

Edith. If this be politic,
And well for thee and England—and
for her— 70

Care not for me who love thee.

Gurth (calling). Harold, Harold!

Harold. The voice of Gurth! (*Enter*
Gurth.) Good even, my
good brother!

Gurth. Good even, gentle Edith.

Edith. Good even, Gurth.

Gurth. Ill news hath come! Our
hapless brother, Tostig—

He, and the giant King of Norway,
Harold

Hardrada—Scotland, Ireland, Ice-
land, Orkney,

Are landed north of Humber, and in a
field

So packt with carnage that the dykes
and brooks

Were bridged and damm'd with dead,
have overthrown 79

Morcar and Edwin.

Harold. Well then, we must fight.
How blows the wind?

Gurth. Against Saint Valery
And William.

Harold. Well then, we will to the
North.

Gurth. Ay, but worse news: this
William sent to Rome,
Swearing thou swarest falsely by his
Saints.

The Pope and that Archdeacon Hilde-
brand,

His master, heard him, and have sent
him back

A holy gonfanon, and a blessed hair
Of Peter, and all France, all Burgundy,
Poitou, all Christendom is raised
against thee.

He hath cursed thee, and all those
who fight for thee, 90

And given thy realm of England to
the bastard.

Harold. Ha! ha!

Edith. O, laugh not!—Strange and
ghastly in the gloom
And shadowing of this double thunder-
cloud

That lours on England—laughter!

Harold. No, not strange!
This was old human laughter in old
Rome

Before a Pope was born, when that
which reign'd

Call'd itself God.—A kindly rendering
Of 'Render unto Cæsar.'—The Good
Shepherd!

Take this, and render that.

Gurth. They have taken York.

Harold. The Lord was God and
came as man—the Pope 101
Is man and comes as God.—York
taken?

Gurth. Yea,

Tostig hath taken York!

Harold. To York then. Edith,
Hadst thou been braver, I had better
braved

All—but I love thee and thou me—
and that

Remains beyond all chances and all
churches,

And that thou knowest.

Edith. Ay, but take back thy ring.
It burns my hand—a curse to thee
and me.
I dare not wear it.

[*Proffers Harold the ring, which
he takes.*]

Harold. But I dare. God with
thee!

[*Exeunt Harold and Gurth.*]

Edith. The King hath cursed him,
if he marry me; 110
The Pope hath cursed him, marry me
or no!
God help me! I know nothing—can
but pray
For Harold—pray, pray, pray—no
help but prayer,
A breath that fleets beyond this iron
world,
And touches Him that made it.

ACT IV

SCENE I.—IN NORTHUMBRIA

ARCHBISHOP ALDRED, MORCAR, EDWIN, and FORCES. *Enter HAROLD,
the standard of the golden Dragon of
Wessex preceding him.*

Harold. What! are thy people sullen
from defeat?
Our Wessex dragon flies beyond the
Humber,
No voice to greet it.

Edwin. Let not our great King
Believe us sullen—only shamed to
the quick
Before the King—as having been so
bruised
By Harold, King of Norway; but our
help
Is Harold, King of England. Pardon
us, thou!
Our silence is our reverence for the
King!

Harold. Earl of the Mercians! if
the truth be gall,
Cram me not thou with honey, when
our good hive 10
Needs every sting to save it.

Voices. Aldwyth! Aldwyth!

Harold. Why cry thy people on thy
sister's name?

Morcar. She hath won upon our
people thro' her beauty
And pleasantness among them.

Voices. Aldwyth, Aldwyth!

Harold. They shout as they would
have her for a queen.

Morcar. She hath follow'd with our
host, and suffer'd all.

Harold. What would ye, men?

Voice. Our old Northumbrian crown,
And kings of our own choosing.

Harold. Your old crown
Were little help without our Saxon
carles

Against Hardrada.

Voice. Little! we are Danes,
Who conquer'd what we walk on, our
own field. 21

Harold. They have been plotting
here! [*Aside.*]

Voice. He calls us little!

Harold. The kingdoms of this world
began with little,

A hill, a fort, a city—that reach'd a
hand

Down to the field beneath it, 'Be thou
mine,'

Then to the next, 'Thou also!' If the
field

Cried out, 'I am mine own,' another
hill,

Or fort, or city, took it, and the first
Fell, and the next became an empire.

Voice. Yet
Thou art but a West Saxon; we are
Danes! 30

Harold. My mother is a Dane, and
I am English;

There is a pleasant fable in old books,
Ye take a stick, and break it; bind a
score

All in one faggot, snap it over knee,
Ye cannot.

Voice. Hear King Harold! he says
true!

Harold. Would ye be Norsemen?

Voices. No!

Harold. Or Norman?

Voices. No!

Harold. Snap not the faggot-band
then.

Voice. That is true!

Voice. Ay, but thou art not kingly,
only grandson

To Wulfnoth, a poor cowherd.

Harold. This old Wulfnoth

Would take me on his knees and tell
me tales 40
Of Alfred and of Athelstan the Great
Who drove you Danes; and yet he
held that Dane,
Jute, Angle, Saxon, were or should be
all
One England; for this cowherd, like
my father,
Who shook the Norman scoundrels off
the throne,
Had in him kingly thoughts — a king
of men,
Not made but born, like the great King
of all,
A light among the oxen.

Voice. That is true!

Voice. Ay, and I love him now, for
mine own father 49

Was great, and cobbled.

Voice. Thou art Tostig's brother,
Who wastes the land.

Harold. This brother comes to save
Your land from waste; I saved it once
before,

For when your people banish'd Tostig
hence,

And Edward would have sent a host
against you,

Then I, who loved my brother, bade
the King,

Who doted on him, sanction your de-
cree

Of Tostig's banishment, and choice of
Morcar,

To help the realm from scattering.

Voice. King! thy brother.

If one may dare to speak the truth,
was wrong'd.

Wild was he, born so; but the plots
against him 60

Had madden'd tamer men.

Morcar. Thou art one of those

Who brake into Lord Tostig's treasure-
house

And slew two hundred of his follow-
ing,

And now, when Tostig hath come back
with power,

Are frightened back to Tostig.

Old Thane. Ugh! Plots and feuds!
This is my ninetieth birthday. Can ye
not

Be brethren? Godwin still at feud with
Alfgar,

And Alfgar hates King Harold. Plots
and feuds!

This is my ninetieth birthday!

Harold. Old man, Harold

Hates nothing; not *his* fault, if our
two houses 70

Be less than brothers.

Voices. Aldwyth, Harold, Aldwyth!

Harold. Again! Morcar! Edwin!

What do they mean?

Edwin. So the good King would
deign to lend an ear

Not overscornful, we might chance
— perchance —

To guess their meaning.

Morcar. Thine own meaning,

Harold,

To make all England one, to close all
feuds,

Mixing our bloods, that thence a king
may rise

Half-Godwin and half-Alfgar, one to
rule

All England beyond question, beyond
quarrel.

Harold. Who sow'd this fancy here
among the people? 80

Morcar. Who knows what sows it-
self among the people?

A goodly flower at times.

Harold. The Queen of Wales?

Why, Morcar, it is all but duty in
her

To hate me; I have heard she hates
me.

Morcar. No!

For I can swear to that, but cannot
swear

That these will follow thee against the
Norsemen,

If thou deny them this.

Harold. Morcar and Edwin,

When will ye cease to plot against my
house?

Edwin. The King can scarcely dream
that we, who know

His prowess in the mountains of the
West, 90

Should care to plot against him in the
North.

Morcar. Who dares arraign us, King,
of such a plot?

Harold. Ye heard one witness even
now.

Morcar. The craven!

There is a faction risen again for Tostig,
 Since Tostig came with Norway —
 fright, not love.

Harold. Morcar and Edwin, will ye,
 if I yield,

Follow against the Norseman ?

Morcar. Surely, surely !

Harold. Morcar and Edwin, will ye
 upon oath 98

Help us against the Norman ?

Morcar. With good will ;

Yea, take the sacrament upon it, King.

Harold. Where is thy sister ?

Morcar. Somewhere hard at hand.

Call and she comes.

[*One goes out, then enter Aldwyth.*]

Harold. I doubt not but thou
 knowest

Why thou art summon'd.

Aldwyth. Why ? — I stay with these,
 Lest thy fierce Tostig spy me out
 alone,

And slay me all alive.

Harold. Canst thou love one
 Who did discrown thine husband, un-
 queen thee ?

Didst thou not love thine husband ?

Aldwyth. O ! my lord,
 The nimble, wild, red, wiry, savage
 king —

That was, my lord, a match of policy.

Harold. Was it ?
 I knew him brave ; he loved his land ;
 he fain 110

Had made her great ; his finger on her
 harp —

I heard him more than once — had in
 it Wales,

Her floods, her woods, her hills. Had
 I been his,

I had been all Welsh.

Aldwyth. O, ay ! — all Welsh — and
 yet

I saw thee drive him up his hills — and
 women

Cling to the conquer'd, if they love,
 the more ;

If not, they cannot hate the conqueror.
 We never — O good Morcar, speak for
 us,

His conqueror conquer'd Aldwyth.

Harold. Goodly news !

Morcar. Doubt it not thou ! Since
 Griffyth's head was sent 120
 To Edward, she hath said it.

Harold. I had rather
 She would have loved her husband.

Aldwyth, Aldwyth,
 Canst thou love me, thou knowing
 where I love ?

Aldwyth. I can, my lord, for mine
 own sake, for thine,
 For England, for thy poor white dove,
 who flutters

Between thee and the porch, but then
 would find

Her nest within the cloister and be
 still.

Harold. Canst thou love one who
 cannot love again ?

Aldwyth. Full hope have I that love
 will answer love.

Harold. Then in the name of the
 great God, so be it ! 130

Come, Aldred, join our hands before
 the hosts,

That all may see.

[*Aldred joins the hands of Harold
 and Aldwyth, and blesses them.*]

Voices. Harold, Harold and Ald-
 wyth !

Harold. Set forth our golden
 Dragon, let him flap

The wings that beat down Wales !

Advance our Standard of the Warrior,
 Dark among gems and gold ; and thou,
 brave banner,

Blaze like a night of fatal stars on
 those

Who read their doom and die.

Where lie the Norsemen ? on the Der-
 went ? ay,

At Stamford-Bridge. 140
Morcar, collect thy men ; *Edwin,* my
 friend —

Thou lingerest. — *Gueth,* —

Last night King Edward came to me
 in dreams —

The rosy face and long down-silver-
 ing beard —

He told me I should conquer. —

I am no woman to put faith in
 dreams.

(*To his army.*)

Last night King Edward came to me in
 dreams,

And told me we should conquer.

Voices. Forward ! Forward !
 Harold and Holy Cross !

Aldwyth. The day is won !

SCENE II

A PLAIN. BEFORE THE BATTLE OF
STAMFORD-BRIDGE.HAROLD *and his GUARD.**Harold.* Who is it comes this way?*Tostig?* (*Enter TOSTIG with a small force.*) O brother,

What art thou doing here?

Tostig. I am foraging
For Norway's army.*Harold.* I could take and slay thee.
Thou art in arms against us.*Tostig.* Take and slay me,
For Edward loved me.*Harold.* Edward bade me spare
thee.*Tostig.* I hate King Edward, for
he join'd with thee
To drive me outlaw'd. Take and
slay me, I say,
Or I shall count thee fool.*Harold.* Take thee, or free thee,
Free thee or slay thee, Norway will
have war;No man would strike with Tostig,
save for Norway. ¹⁰Thou art nothing in thine England,
save for Norway,Who loves not thee, but war. What
dost thou here,Trampling thy mother's bosom into
blood?*Tostig.* She hath wean'd me from
it with such bitterness.I come for mine own earldom, my
Northumbria;Thou hast given it to the enemy of
our house.*Harold.* Northumbria threw thee
off, she will not have thee.Thou hast misused her; and, O crown-
ing crime!Hast murder'd thine own guest, the
son of Orm,

Gamel, at thine own hearth.

Tostig. The slow, fat fool!
He draw'd and prated so, I smote him
suddenly;I knew not what I did. He held with
Morcar. — ²¹

I hate myself for all things that I do.

Harold. And Morcar holds with us.
Come back with him.Know what thou dost; and we may
find for thee,So thou be chasten'd by thy banish-
ment,

Some easier earldom.

Tostig. What for Norway then?
He looks for land among us, he and
his.*Harold.* Seven feet of English land,
or something more,

Seeing he is a giant.

Tostig. That is noble! ³⁰
That sounds of Godwin.*Harold.* Come thou back, and be
Once more a son of Godwin.*Tostig (turns away).* O brother,
brother,

O Harold —

*Harold (laying his hand on Tostig's
shoulder).* Nay then, come thou
back to us!*Tostig (after a pause turning to him).*
Never shall any man say that I,
that TostigConjured the mightier Harold from
his NorthTo do the battle for me here in Eng-
land,

Then left him for the meaner! thee! —

Thou hast no passion for the house of
Godwin —Thou hast but cared to make thyself
a king —Thou hast sold me for a cry. — ⁴⁰Thou gavest thy voice against me in
the Council —I hate thee, and despise thee, and defy
thee.Farewell for ever. [*Exit.*
Harold. On to Stamford-Bridge!]

SCENE III

AFTER THE BATTLE OF STAMFORD
BRIDGE. BANQUETHAROLD *and* ALDWYTH. GURTH,
LEOFWIN, MORCAR, EDWIN, *and*
other EARLS *and* THANES.*Voices.* Hail! Harold! Aldwyth!
hail, bridegroom and bride!*Aldwyth (talking with Harold).* An-
swer them thou!Is this our marriage-banquet? Would
the wines

Of wedding had been dash'd into the cups

Of victory, and our marriage and thy glory

Been drunk together! these poor hands but sew,

Spin, broider — would that they were man's to have held

The battle-axe by thee!

Harold. There *was* a moment When, being forced aloof from all my guard,

And striking at Hardrada and his madmen, ¹⁰

I had wish'd for any weapon.

Aldwyth. Why art thou sad? *Harold.* I have lost the boy who

play'd at ball with me, With whom I fought another fight

than this

Of Stamford-Bridge.

Aldwyth. Ay! ay! thy victories Over our own poor Wales, when at thy side

He conquer'd with thee.

Harold. No — the childish fist That cannot strike again.

Aldwyth. Thou art too kindly. Why didst thou let so many Norse-

men hence?

Thy fierce forekings had clench'd their pirate hides

To the bleak church doors, like kites upon a barn. ²⁰

Harold. Is there so great a need to tell thee why?

Aldwyth. Yea, am I not thy wife?

Voices. Hail, Harold, Aldwyth! Bridegroom and bride!

Aldwyth. Answer them! [*To Harold.*

Harold (to all). Earls and thanes! Full thanks for your fair greeting of my bride!

Earls, thanes, and all our countrymen! the day,

Our day beside the Derwent, will not shine

Less than a star among the goldenest hours

Of Alfred, or of Edward his great son, Or Athelstan, or English Ironside

Who fought with Knut, or Knut who coming Dane ³⁰

Died English. Every man about his King

Fought like a king; the King like his own man,

No better; one for all, and all for one, One soul! and therefore have we shat-

ter'd back The hugest wave from Norseland ever

yet Surged on us, and our battle-axes broken

The Raven's wing, and dumb'd his carrion croak

From the gray sea for ever. Many are gone —

Drink to the dead who died for us, the living

Who fought and would have died, but happier lived, ⁴⁰

If happier be to live; they both have life In the large mouth of England, till

her voice

Die with the world. Hail — hail!

Morcar. May all invaders perish like Hardrada!

All traitors fail like Tostig!

[*All drink but Harold.* *Aldwyth.* Thy cup's full!

Harold. I saw the hand of Tostig cover it.

Our dear, dead traitor-brother, Tostig, him

Reverently we buried. Friends, had I been here,

Without too large self-lauding I must hold

The sequel had been other than his league ⁵⁰

With Norway, and this battle. Peace be with him!

He was not of the worst. If there be those

At banquet in this hall, and hearing me —

For there be those, I fear, who prick'd the lion

To make him spring, that sight of Danish blood

Might serve an end not English — peace with them

Likewise, if they can be at peace with what

God gave us to divide us from the wolf!

Aldwyth (aside to Harold). Make not our Morcar sullen; it is not wise.

Harold. Hail to the living who fought, the dead who fell! ⁶⁰

Voices. Hail, hail!



STAMFORD BRIDGE

First Thane. How ran that answer
which King Harold gave
To his dead namesake, when he ask'd
for England?

Leofwin. 'Seven feet of English
earth, or something more,
Seeing he is a giant!'

First Thane. Then for the bastard
Six feet and nothing more!

Leofwin. Ay, but belike
Thou hast not learnt his measure.

First Thane. By Saint Edmund
I over-measure him. Sound sleep to
the man

Here by dead Norway without dream
or dawn!

Second Thane. What, is he bragging
still that he will come,
To thrust our Harold's throne from
under him?

My nurse would tell me of a molehill
crying

To a mountain, 'Stand aside and room
for me!'

First Thane. Let him come! let him
come! Here's to him, sink or
swim! [*Drinks.*]

Second Thane. God sink him!

First Thane. Cannot hands which
had the strength

To shove that stranded iceberg off our
shores,

And send the shatter'd North again to
sea,

Scuttle his cockle-shell? What's Bru
nanburg

To Stamford-Bridge? a war-crash, and
so hard,

So loud, that, by Saint Dunstan, old
Saint Thor—

By God, we thought him dead—but
our old Thor

Heard his own thunder again, and
woke and came

Among us again, and mark'd the sons
of those

Who made this Britain England, break
the North—

Mark'd how the war-axe swang,
 Heard how the war-horn sang,
 Mark'd how the spear-head sprang,
 Heard how the shield-wall rang,
 Iron on iron clang,
 Anvil on hammer bang — 90

Second Thane. Hammer on anvil,
 hammer on anvil. Old dog,
 Thou art drunk, old dog !

First Thane. Too drunk to fight
 with thee !

Second Thane. Fight thou with thine
 own double, not with me,
 Keep that for Norman William !

First Thane. Down with William !

Third Thane. The washerwoman's
 brat !

Fourth Thane. The tanner's bas-
 tard !

Fifth Thane. The Falaise byblow !

*Enter a THANE, from Pevensey, spat-
 tered with mud.*

Harold. Ay, but what late guest,
 As haggard as a fast of forty days,
 And caked and plaster'd with a hun-
 dred mires,
 Hath stumbled on our cups ?

Thane from Pevensey. My lord the
 King !

William the Norman, for the wind had
 changed — 100

Harold. I felt it in the middle of
 that fierce fight

At Stamford-Bridge. William hath
 landed, ha ?

Thane from Pevensey. Landed at
 Pevensey — I am from Peven-
 sey —

Hath wasted all the land at Pevensey —
 Hath harried mine own cattle — God
 confound him !

I have ridden night and day from
 Pevensey —

A thousand ships — a hundred thou-
 sand men —

Thousands of horses, like as many lions
 Neighing and roaring as they leapt to
 land —

Harold. How oft in coming hast
 thou broken bread ? 110

Thane from Pevensey. Some thrice,
 or so.

Harold. Bring not thy hollowness
 On our full feast. Famine is fear,
 were it but

Of being starved. Sit down, sit down,
 and eat,
 And, when again red-blooded, speak
 again.

(Aside.) The men that guarded Eng-
 land to the South
 Were scatter'd to the harvest. — No
 power mine

To hold their force together. — Many
 are fallen

At Stamford-Bridge — the people
 stupid-sure

Sleep like their swine — in South and
 North at once

I could not be.

(Aloud.) Gurth, Leofwin, Morcar,
 Edwin ! 120

(Pointing to the revellers.) The curse
 of England ! these are drown'd
 in wassail,

And cannot see the world but thro'
 their wines !

Leave them ! and thee too, Aldwyth,
 must I leave —

Harsh is the news ! hard is our honey-
 moon !

Thy pardon *(Turning round to his at-
 tendants.)* Break the banquet
 up — Ye four !

And thou, my carrier-pigeon of black
 news,

Cram thy crop full, but come when
 thou art call'd. [*Exit Harold.*]

ACT V

SCENE I. A TENT ON A MOUND
 FROM WHICH CAN BE SEEN THE
 FIELD OF SENLAC

HAROLD, *sitting*; by him standing
 HUGH MARGOT the Monk, GURTH,
 LEOFWIN.

Harold. Refer my cause, my crown
 to Rome ! The wolf
 Mudded the brook and predetermined
 all.

Monk,
 Thou hast said thy say, and had my
 constant 'No'

For all but instant battle. I hear no
 more.

Margot. Hear me again — for the
 last time. Arise,

Scatter thy people home, descend the hill,
Lay hands of full allegiance in thy Lord's
And crave his mercy, for the Holy Father
Hath given this realm of England to the Norman.

Harold. Then for the last time,
monk, I ask again
When had the Lateran and the Holy Father
To do with England's choice of her own king?

Margot. Earl, the first Christian
Cæsar drew to the East
To leave the Pope dominion in the West.
He gave him all the kingdoms of the West.

Harold. So! — did he? — Earl — I have a mind to play
The William with thine eyesight and thy tongue.
Earl — ay — thou art but a messenger of William.

I am weary — go; make me not wroth with thee!

Margot. Mock-king, I am the messenger of God,
His Norman Daniel! Mene, Mene, Tekel!
Is thy wrath hell, that I should spare to cry,
Yon Heaven is wroth with thee? Hear me again!

Our Saints have moved the Church that moves the world,
And all the Heavens and very God; they heard —
They know King Edward's promise and thine — thine.

Harold. Should they not know free England crowns herself?
Not know that he nor I had power to promise?

Not know that Edward cancell'd his own promise?
And for my part therein — Back to that juggler,
Tell him the Saints are nobler than he dreams,

Tell him that God is nobler than the Saints,
And tell him we stand arm'd on Senlac Hill,

And bide the doom of God.

Margot. Hear it thro' me.
The realm for which thou art forsworn is cursed,

The babe enwomb'd and at the breast is cursed,

The corpse thou whelmest with thine earth is cursed,

The soul who fighteth on thy side is cursed,

The seed thou sowest in thy field is cursed,

The steer wherewith thou plowest thy field is cursed,

The fowl that fleeth o'er thy field is cursed,

And thou, usurper, liar —
Harold. Out, beast monk!

[*Lifting his hand to strike him.*
Gurth stops the blow.

I ever hated monks.

Margot. I am but a voice
Among you; murder, martyr me if ye will —

Harold. Thanks, Gurth! The simple, silent, selfless man
Is worth a world of tonguesters. (*To Margot.*) Get thee gone!

He means the thing he says. See him out safe!

Leofwin. He hath blown himself as red as fire with curses.

An honest fool! Follow me, honest fool,

But if thou blurt thy curse among our folk,

I know not — I may give that egg-bald head

The tap that silences.

Harold. See him out safe.
[*Exeunt Leofwin and Margot.*

Gurth. Thou hast lost thine even temper, brother Harold!

Harold. Gurth, when I past by Waltham, my foundation

For men who serve the neighbor, not themselves,

I cast me down prone, praying; and, when I rose,

They told me that the Holy Rood had lean'd

And bow'd above me; whether that which held it

Had weaken'd, and the Rood itself were bound

To that necessity which binds us down;

Whether it bow'd at all but in their fancy;

Or if it bow'd, whether it symbol'd ruin

Or glory, who shall tell? but they were sad,

And somewhat sadden'd me.

Gurth. Yet if a fear,
Or shadow of a fear, lest the strange

Saints
By whom thou swarest should have power to balk

Thy puissance in this fight with him who made

And heard thee swear — bro'ther — I have not sworn —

If the King fall, may not the kingdom fall? 70

But if I fall, I fall, and thou art King;

And if I win, I win, and thou art King;

Draw thou to London, there make strength to breast

Whatever chance, but leave this day to me.

Leofwin (entering). And waste the land about thee as thou goest,

And be thy hand as winter on the field,
To leave the foe no forage.

Harold. Noble Gurth!
Best son of Godwin! If I fall, I fall —

The doom of God! How should the people fight

When the King flies? And, Leofwin, art thou mad? 80

How should the King of England waste the fields

Of England, his own people? — No glance yet

Of the Northumbrian helmet on the heath?

Leofwin. No, but a shoal of wives upon the heath,

And some one saw thy willy-nilly nun
Vying a tress against our golden fern.

Harold. Vying a tear with our cold dews, a sigh

With these low-moaning heavens.
Let her be fetch'd.

We have parted from our wife without reproach,

Tho' we have pierced thro' all her practices; 90

And that is well.

Leofwin. I saw her even now;
She hath not left us.

Harold. Nought of Morcar then?
Gurth. Nor seen, nor heard; thine,

William's, or his own
As wind blows, or tide flows. Belike

he watches
If this war-storm in one of its rough

rolls
Wash up that old crown of Northum-

berland.
Harold. I married her for Morcar

— a sin against
The truth of love. Evil for good, it

seems,
Is oft as childless of the good as

evil
For evil.

Leofwin. Good for good hath borne
at times 100

A bastard false as William.
Harold. Ay, if Wisdom

Pair'd not with Good. But I am
somewhat worn,

A snatch of sleep were like the peace
of God,

Gurth, Leofwin, go once more about
the hill —

What did the dead man call it —
Sanguelac,

The lake of blood?
Leofwin. A lake that dips in Wil-

liam
As well as Harold.

Harold. Like enough. I have
seen

The trenches dug, the palisades up-
rear'd

And wattled thick with ash and wil-
low-wands,

Yea, wrought at them myself. Go
round once more; 110

See all be sound and whole. No Nor-
man horse

Can shatter England, standing shield
by shield;

Tell that again to all.
Gurth. I will, good brother.

Harold. Our guardsman hath but
toil'd his hand and foot,

I hand, foot, heart and head. Some
wine!

(*One pours wine into a goblet which
he hands to Harold.*) Too much!

What? we must use our battle-axe to-
day;

Our guardsman have slept well, since
we came in?

Leofwin. Ay, slept and snored.
Your second-sighted man

That scared the dying conscience of
the king

Misheard their snores for groans.

They are up again ¹²⁰

And chanting that old song of Brun-
naburg

Where England conquer'd.

Harold. That is well. The Nor-
man,

What is he doing?

Leofwin. Praying for Normandy;
Our scouts have heard the tinkle of
their bells.

Harold. And our old songs are
prayers for England too!

But by all Saints —

Leofwin. Barring the Norman!

Harold. Nay,

Were the great trumpet blowing
doomsday dawn,

I needs must rest. Call when the
Norman moves —

[*Exeunt all but Harold.*]

No horse — thousands of horses — our
shield wall —

Wall — break it not — break not —
break — [Sleeps.]

Vision of Edward. Son Harold, I
thy king, who came before ¹³¹

To tell thee thou shouldst win at Stam-
ford Bridge,

Come yet once more, from where I am
at peace,

Because I loved thee in my mortal
day,

To tell thee thou shalt die on Senlac
Hill —

Sanguelac!

Vision of Wulfnoth. O brother,
from my ghastly oubliette

I send my voice across the narrow
seas —

No more, no more, dear brother, never-
more —

Sanguelac! ¹⁴⁰

Vision of Tostig. O brother, most
unbrotherlike to me,

Thou gavest thy voice against me in
my life,

I give my voice against thee from the
grave —

Sanguelac!

Vision of Norman Saints. O hap-
less Harold! King but for an
hour!

Thou swearst falsely by our blessed
bones,

We give our voice against thee out of
heaven!

Sanguelac! Sanguelac! The arrow!
the arrow!

*Harold (starting up, battle-axe in
hand).* Away!

My battle-axe against your voices.
Peace!

The King's last word — 'the arrow!'
I shall die — ¹⁵⁰

I die for England then, who lived for
England —

What nobler? men must die.

I cannot fall into a falser world —

I have done no man wrong. Tostig,
poor brother,

Art thou so anger'd?

Fain had I kept thine earldom in thy
hands

Save for thy wild and violent will that
wrench'd

All hearts of freemen from thee. I
could do

No other than this way advise the
king

Against the race of Godwin. Is it
possible ¹⁶⁰

That mortal men should bear their
earthly heats

Into yon bloodless world, and threaten
us thence

Unschool'd of Death? Thus then thou
art revenged —

I left our England naked to the South
To meet thee in the North. The Norse-
man's raid

Hath helpt the Norman, and the race
of Godwin

Hath ruin'd Godwin! No — our wak-
ing thoughts

Suffer a stormless shipwreck in the
pools

Of sullen slumber, and arise again
Disjointed; only dreams — where

mine own self ¹⁷⁰

Takes part against myself! Why? for
a spark

Of self-disdain born in me when I
sware

Falsely to him, the falser Norman
over

His gilded ark of mummy-saints, by whom
I knew not that I swear, — not for myself —
For England — yet not wholly —

Enter EDITH.

Edith, Edith,
Get thou into thy cloister as the King
Will'd it; be safe, the perjury-mongering Count
Hath made too good an use of Holy Church
To break her close! There the great
God of truth ¹⁸⁰
Fill all thine hours with peace! — A
lying devil
Hath haunted me — mine oath — my
wife — I fain
Had made my marriage not a lie; I
could not.
Thou art my bride! and thou in after
years
Praying perchance for this poor soul
of mine
In cold, white cells beneath an icy
moon —
This memory to thee! — and this to
England,
My legacy of war against the Pope
From child to child, from Pope to
Pope, from age to age,
Till the sea wash her level with her
shores, ¹⁹⁰
Or till the Pope be Christ's.

Enter ALDWYTH.

Aldwyth (to Edith). Away from him!

Edith. I will. — I have not spoken
to the king
One word; and one I must. Farewell!

[Going.
Not yet.

Harold.
Stay.

Edith. To what use?

Harold. The King commands thee,
woman!

(To ALDWYTH.)

Have thy two brethren sent their
forces in?

Aldwyth. Nay, I fear not.

Harold. Then there's no force in
thee!
Thou didst possess thyself of Edward's
ear

To part me from the woman that I
loved!

Thou didst arouse the fierce Northum-
brians!

Thou hast been false to England and
to me!

As — in some sort — I have been false
to thee. ²⁰⁰

Leave me. No more — Pardon on
both sides — Go!

Aldwyth. Alas, my lord, I loved thee.

Harold (bitterly). With a love

Passing thy love for Griffyth! where-
fore now

Obeys my first and last commandment.
Go!

Aldwyth. O Harold! husband! Shall
we meet again?

Harold. After the battle — after the
battle. Go.

Aldwyth. I go. *(Aside.)* That I
could stab her standing there!

[Exit Aldwyth.]

Edith. Alas, my lord, she loved thee.

Harold. Never! never!

Edith. I saw it in her eyes!

Harold. I see it in thine.

And not on thee — nor England — fall
God's doom! ²¹¹

Edith. On thee? on me! And thou
art England! Alfred

Was England. Ethelred was nothing.
England

Is but her king, and thou art Harold!

Harold. Edith,

The sign in heaven — the sudden blast
at sea —

My fatal oath — the dead Saints —
the dark dreams —

The Pope's anathema — the Holy Rood
That bow'd to me at Waltham — Edith,
if

I, the last English King of England —

Edith. No,

First of a line that coming from the
people, ²²⁰

And chosen by the people —

Harold. And fighting for
and dying for the people —

Edith. Living! living!

Harold. Yea so, good cheer! thou
art Harold, I am Edith!

Look not thus wan!

Edith. What matters how I look?
Have we not broken Wales and Norse-
land? slain,

Whose life was all one battle, incar-
nate war,

Their giant-king, a mightier man-in-arms

Than William.

Harold. Ay, my girl, no tricks in him—

No bastard he! when all was lost, he yell'd,

And bit his shield, and dash'd it on the ground, ²³⁰

And swaying his two-handed sword about him,

Two deaths at every swing, ran in upon us

And died so, and I loved him as I hate This liar who made me liar. If Hate

can kill,

And Loathing wield a Saxon battle-axe—

Edith. Waste not thy might before the battle!

Harold. No,

And thou must hence. Stigand will see thee safe,

And so—Farewell.

[*He is going, but turns back.*]

The ring thou dardest not wear, I have had it fashion'd, see, to meet my hand.

[*Harold shows the ring which is on his finger.*]

Farewell! ²⁴⁰

[*He is going, but turns back again.*]

I am dead as Death this day to aught of earth's

Save William's death or mine.

Edith. Thy death!—to-day! Is it not thy birthday?

Harold. Ay, that happy day! A birthday welcome! happy days and many!

One—this! [*They embrace.*]

Look, I will bear thy blessing into the battle

And front the doom of God.

Norman Cries (heard in the distance).

Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

Enter GURTH.

Gurth. The Norman moves!

Harold. Harold and Holy Cross!

[*Exeunt Harold and Gurth.*]

Enter STIGAND.

Stigand. Our Church in arms—the lamb the lion—not
Spear into pruning-hook—the counter
way— ²⁵⁰

Cowl, helm; and crozier, battle-axe.

Abbot Alfwig,

Leofric, and all the monks of Peter-boro'

Strike for the king; but I, old wretch, old Stigand,

With hands too limp to brandish iron—
—and yet

I have a power—would Harold ask me for it

I have a power.

Edith. What power, holy father?

Stigand. Power now from Harold to command thee hence

And see thee safe from Senlac.

Edith. I remain!

Stigand. Yea, so will I, daughter, until I find

Which way the battle balance. I can see it ²⁶⁰

From where we stand; and, live or die, I would

I were among them!

CANONS from Waltham (*singing without*).

Salva patriam,
Sancte Pater,
Salva, Fili,
Salva, Spiritus,
Salva patriam,
Sancta Mater. ¹

Edith. Are those the blessed angels quiring, father?

Stigand. No, daughter, but the canons out of Waltham, ²⁷⁰

The king's foundation, that have follow'd him.

Edith. O God of battles, make their wall of shields

Firm as thy cliffs, strengthen their palisades!

What is that whirring sound?

Stigand. The Norman arrow!

Edith. Look out upon the battle—is he safe?

Stigand. The King of England stands between his banners.

He glitters on the crowning of the hill.

God save King Harold!

Edith.—chosen by his people
And fighting for his people!

Stigand. There is one

¹ The *a* throughout these Latin hymns should be sounded broad, as in 'father.'

Come as Goliath came of yore—he
flings 280

His brand in air and catches it again,
He is chanting some old war-song.

Edith. And no David
To meet him?

Stigand. Ay, there springs a Saxon
on him,

Falls—and another falls.

Edith. Have mercy on us!

Stigand. Lo! our good Gurth hath
smitten him to the death.

Edith. So perish all the enemies of
Harold!

CANONS (*singing*).

Hostis in Angliam
Ruit prædator;
Illorum, Domine,
Scutum scindatur! 290
Hostis per Angliæ
Plagas bacchatur;
Casa crematur,
Pastor fugatur,
Grex trucidatur—

Stigand. Illos truida, Domine.

Edith. Ay, good father.

CANONS (*singing*).

Illorum scelera
Pœna sequatur!

English Cries. Harold and Holy
Cross! Out! out!

Stigand. Our javelins
Answer their arrows. All the Nor-
man foot 300

Are storming up the hill. The range
of knights

Sit, each a statue on his horse, and
wait.

English Cries. Harold and God Al-
mighty!

Norman Cries. Ha Rou! Ha Rou!

CANONS (*singing*).

Eques cum pedite
Præpediatur!
Illorum in lacrymas
Cruor fundatur!
Pereant, pereant,
Anglia præcatur.

Stigand. Look, daughter, look.

Edith. Nay, father, look for me!

Stigand. Our axes lighten with a
single flash 311
About the summit of the hill, and
heads

And arms are sliver'd off and splin-
ter'd by

Their lightning—and they fly—the
Norman flies.

Edith. Stigand, O father, have we
won the day?

Stigand. No, daughter, no—they
fall behind the horse—

Their horse are thronging to the bar-
ricades;

I see the gonfanon of Holy Peter
Floating above their helmets—ha! he
is down!

Edith. He down! Who down?

Stigand. The Norman Count is
down. 320

Edith. So perish all the enemies of
England!

Stigand. No, no, he hath risen
again—he bares his face—

Shouts something—he points onward
—all their horse

Swallow the hill locust-like, swarming
up.

Edith. O God of battles, make his
battle-axe keen

As thine own sharp-dividing justice,
heavy

As thine own bolts that fall on crime-
ful heads

Charged with the weight of heaven
wherefrom they fall!

CANONS (*singing*).

Jacta tonitrua,
Deus bellator! 330
Surgas e tenebris,
Sis vindicator!
Fulmina, fulmina,
Deus vastator!

Edith. O God of battles, they are
three to one,

Make thou one man as three to roll
them down!

CANONS (*singing*).

Equus cum equite
Dejiciatur!
Acies, acies
Prona sternatur!
Illorum lanceas 340
Frangere, Creator!

Stigand. Yea, yea, for how their
lances snap and shiver
Against the shifting blaze of Harold's
axe!

War-woodman of old Woden, how he
fells
The mortal copse of faces ! There !
And there !
The horse and horseman cannot meet
the shield,
The blow that brains the horseman
cleaves the horse,
The horse and horseman roll along the
hill,
They fly once more, they fly, the Nor-
man flies ! 350

*Equus cum equite
Præcipitatur.*

Edith. O God, the God of truth
hath heard my cry !
Follow them, follow them, drive them
to the sea !

*Illorum scelera
Pœna sequatur !*

Stigand. Truth ! no ; a lie ; a trick,
a Norman trick !
They turn on the pursuer, horse
against foot,
They murder all that follow.

Edith. Have mercy on us !

Stigand. Hot-headed fools—to
burst the wall of shields ! 360
They have broken the commandment
of the king !

Edith. His oath was broken—O
holy Norman Saints,
Ye that are now of heaven, and see
beyond

Your Norman shrines, pardon it, par-
don it,
That he forswore himself for all he
loved,

Me, me and all ! Look out upon the
battle !

Stigand. They thunder again upon
the barricades.

My sight is eagle, but the strife so
thick—

This is the hottest of it ; hold, ash !
hold, willow !

English Cries. Out, out !

Norman Cries. Ha Rou !

Stigand. Ha ! Gurth had leapt
upon him 370

And slain him ; he hath fallen.

Edith. And I am heard.
Glory to God in the Highest ! fallen,
fallen !

Stigand. No, no, his horse—he
mounts another—wields
His war-club, dashes it on Gurth, and
Gurth,

Our noble Gurth, is down !

Edith. Have mercy on us !

Stigand. And Leofwin is down !

Edith. Have mercy on us !

O Thou that knowest, let not my
strong prayer

Be weaken'd in thy sight, because I
love

The husband of another !

Norman Cries. Ha Rou ! Ha Rou !

Edith. I do not hear our English
war-cry.

Stigand. No. 380

Edith. Look out upon the battle—
is he safe ?

Stigand. He stands between the
banners with the dead

So piled about him he can hardly move.
Edith (takes up the war-cry). Out !

out !

Norman Cries. Ha Rou !

Edith (cries out). Harold and Holy
Cross !

Norman Cries. Ha Rou ! Ha Rou !

Edith. What is that whirring
sound ?

Stigand. The Norman sends his
arrows up to heaven,

They fall on those within the palisade !

Edith. Look out upon the hill—
is Harold there ?

Stigand. Sanguelac—Sanguelac—
the arrow—the arrow!—away !

SCENE II

FIELD OF THE DEAD. NIGHT

ALDWYTH and EDITH.

Aldwyth. O Edith, art thou here ?

O Harold, Harold—

Our Harold—we shall never see him
more.

Edith. For there was more than
sister in my kiss,

And so the Saints were wroth. I can-
not love them,

For they are Norman Saints—and
yet I should—

They are so much holier than their
harlot's son

With whom they play'd their game
against the King!

Aldwyth. The King is slain, the
kingdom overthrown!

Edith. No matter!

Aldwyth. How no matter, Harold
slain?—

I cannot find his body. O, help me
thou!

O Edith, if I ever wrought against
thee,

Forgive me thou, and help me here!

Edith. No matter!

Aldwyth. Not help me, nor forgive
me?

Edith. So thou saidest.

Aldwyth. I say it now, forgive me!

Edith. Cross me not!

I am seeking one who wedded me in
secret.

Whisper! God's angels only know it.

Ha!

What art *thou* doing here among the
dead?

They are stripping the dead bodies
naked yonder,

And thou art come to rob them of
their rings!

Aldwyth. O Edith, Edith, I have
lost both crown

And husband.

Edith. So have I.

Aldwyth. I tell thee, girl,
I am seeking my dead Harold.

Edith. And I mine!

The Holy Father strangled him with
a hair

Of Peter, and his brother Tostig
helped;

The wicked sister clapt her hands and
laugh'd;

Then all the dead fell on him.

Aldwyth. Edith, Edith—

Edith. What was he like, this hus-
band? like to thee?

Call not for help from me. I knew
him not.

He lies not here; not close beside the
standard.

Here fell the truest, manliest hearts
of England.

Go further hence and find him.

Aldwyth. She is crazed!

Edith. That doth not matter either:
Lower the light.

He must be here.

*Enter two CANONS, OSGOD and ATHEL-
RIC, with torches. They turn over the
dead bodies and examine them as they
pass.*

Osgod. I think that this is Thur-
kill.

Athelric. More likely Godric.

Osgod. I am sure this body
Is Alfwig, the king's uncle.

Athelric. So it is!

No, no,—brave Gurth, one gash from
brow to knee!

Osgod. And here is Leofwin.

Edith. And here is *he*!

Aldwyth. Harold? O, no—nay, if
it were—my God,

They have so maim'd and murder'd
all his face

There is no man can swear to him!

Edith. But one woman!

Look you, we never mean to part
again.

I have found him, I am happy.

Was there not some one ask'd me for
forgiveness?

I yield it freely, being the true wife
Of this dead King, who never bore
revenge.

*Enter COUNT WILLIAM and WILLIAM
MALET.*

William. Who be these women.
And what body is this?

Edith. Harold, thy better!

William. Ay, and what art thou?

Edith. His wife!

Malet. Not true, my girl, here is
the Queen!

[*Pointing out Aldwyth.*

William (to Aldwyth). Wast thou
his Queen?

Aldwyth. I was the Queen of Wales.

William. Why, then of England.

Madam, fear us not.

(*To Malet.*) Knowest thou this
other?

Malet. When I visited England,
Some held she was his wife in secret
—some—

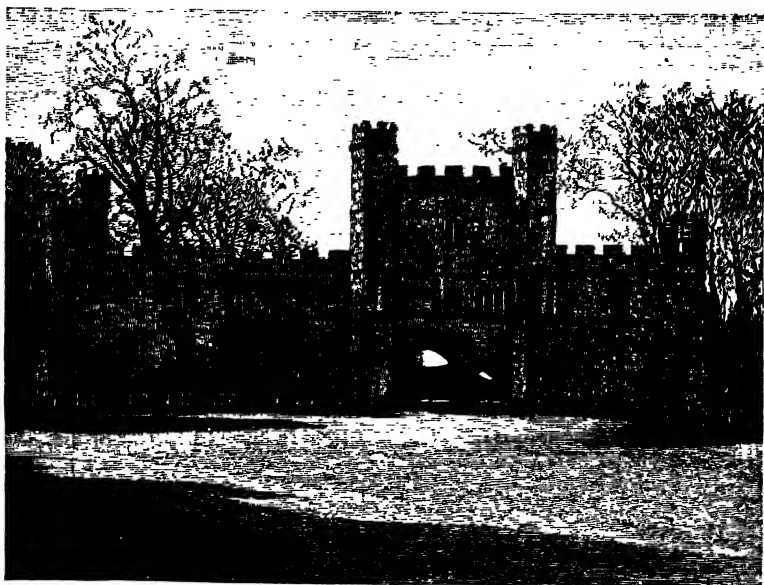
Well—some believed she was his
paramour.

Edith. Norman, thou liest! liars all
of you,

Your Saints and all! I am his wife!
and she—

For look, our marriage ring!

[*She draws it off the finger of Harold.*



BATTLE ABBEY

I lost it somehow —
I lost it, playing with it when I was
wild.

That bred the doubt! but I am wiser
now —

I am too wise — Will none among you
all

Bear me true witness — only for this
once — 60

That I have found it here again?

[She put it on.

And thou,

Thy wife am I for ever and evermore.

[Falls on the body and dies.

William. Death! — and enough of
death for this one day,

The day of Saint Calixtus, and the
day,

My day when I was born.

Malet. And this dead King's,
Who, king or not, hath kinglike
fought and fallen,

His birthday, too. It seems but yes-
ter-even

I held it with him in his English
halls,

His day, with all his roof-tree ringing
'Harold,'

Before he fell into the snare of Guy;
When all men counted Harold would
be King, 71

And Harold was most happy.

William. Thou art half English.

Take them away!

Malet, I vow to build a church to
God

Here on the hill of battle; let our
high altar

Stand where their standard fell —
where these two lie.

Take them away, I do not love to see
them.

Pluck the dead woman off the dead
man, Malet!

Malet. Faster than ivy! Must I
hack her arms off?

How shall I part them?

William. Leave them. Let them
be! 80

Bury him and his paramour together.
He that was false in oath to me, it
seems

Was false to his own wife. We will
 not give him
 A Christian burial; yet he was a war-
 rior,
 And wise, yea truthful, till that
 blighted vow
 Which God avenged to-day.
 Wrap them together in a purple cloak,
 And lay them both upon the waste
 sea-shore
 At Hastings, there to guard the land
 for which
 He did forswear himself—a warrior
 —ay,⁹⁰
 And but that Holy Peter fought for
 us,
 And that the false Northumbrian held
 aloof,
 And save for that chance arrow which
 the Saints
 Sharpen'd and sent against him—
 who can tell?—
 Three horses had I slain beneath me;
 twice
 I thought that all was lost. Since I
 knew battle,
 And that was from my boyhood,
 never yet—

No, by the splendor of God—have I
 fought men
 Like Harold and his brethren, and his
 guard
 Of English. Every man about his
 king¹⁰⁰
 Fell where he stood. They loved
 him; and pray God
 My Normans may but move as true
 with me
 To the door of death! Of one self-
 stock at first,
 Make them again one people—Nor-
 man, English,
 And English, Norman; we should
 have a hand
 To grasp the world with, and a foot
 to stamp it—
 Flat. Praise the Saints! It is over.
 No more blood!
 I am King of England, so they thwart
 me not,
 And I will rule according to their
 laws.
 (To Aldwyth.) Madam, we will en-
 treat thee with all honor.¹¹⁰
Aldwyth. My punishment is more
 than I can bear.



LORD SELBORNE (ROUNDELL PALMER)

BECKET

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR,

THE RIGHT HONORABLE EARL OF SELBORNE.

MY DEAR SELBORNE, — To you, the honored Chancellor of our own day, I dedicate this dramatic memorial of your great predecessor ; — which, altho' not intended in its present form to meet the exigencies of our modern theatre, has nevertheless — for so you have assured me — won your approbation. Ever yours, TENNYSON.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HENRY II. (*son of the Earl of Anjou*).

THOMAS BECKET, *Chancellor of England, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.*

GILBERT FOLIOT, *Bishop of London.*

ROGER, *Archbishop of York.*
Bishop of Hereford.

HILARY, *Bishop of Chichester.*
 JOCELYN, *Bishop of Salisbury.*
 JOHN OF SALISBURY } *friends of Becket.*
 HERBERT OF BOSHAM }
 WALTER MAP, *reputed author of 'Goliath,' Latin poems against the priesthood.*
 KING LOUIS OF FRANCE.
 GEOFFREY, *son of Rosamund and Henry.*
 GRIM, *a monk of Cambridge.*
 SIR REGINALD FITZURSK }
 SIR RICHARD DE BRITO } *the four knights of the king's household, enemies of Becket.*
 SIR WILLIAM DE TRACY }
 SIR HUGH DE MORVILLE }
 DE BROC OF SALTWOOD CASTLE.
 LORD LEICESTER.
 PHILIP DE FLEEMOSYNA.
 TWO KNIGHT TEMPLARS.
 JOHN OF OXFORD (*called the Swearer*).
 ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE, *Queen of England (divorced from Louis of France).*
 ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD.
 MARGERY.

Knights, Monks, Beggars, etc.

BECKET

PROLOGUE

A CASTLE IN NORMANDY. INTERIOR
 OF THE HALL. ROOFS OF A CITY
 SEEN THRO' WINDOWS

HENRY and BECKET at chess.

Henry. So then our good Archbishop
 Theobald

Lies dying.

Becket. I am grieved to know as
 much.

Henry. But we must have a mightier
 man than he

For his successor.

Becket. Have you thought of one ?

Henry. A cleric lately poison'd his
 own mother,

And being brought before the courts
 of the Church,

They but degraded him. I hope they
 whipt him.

I would have hang'd him.

Becket. It is your move.

Henry. Well—there. [*Moves.*

The Church in the pell-mell of Ste-
 phen's time

Hath climb'd the throne and almost
 clutch'd the crown ;

But by the royal customs of our realm
 The Church should hold her baronies

of me,

Like other lords amenable to law.

I'll have them written down and made
 the law.

Becket. My liege, I move my bishop.

Henry. And if I live,

No man without my leave shall ex-
 communicate

My tenants or my household.

Becket. Look to your king.

Henry. No man without my leave
 shall cross the seas

To set the Pope against me — I pray
 your pardon.

Becket. Well — will you move ?

Henry. There. [*Moves.*

Becket. Check — you move so wildly.

Henry. There then ! [*Moves.*

Becket. Why — there then, for you
 see my bishop

Hath brought your king to a standstill.
 You are beaten.

Henry (kicks over the board). Why,
 there then — down go bishop
 and king together.

I loathe being beaten ; had I fixt my
 fancy

Upon the game I should have beaten
 thee,

But that was vagabond.

Becket. Where, my liege ? With
 Phryne,

Or Lais, or thy Rosamund, or an-
 other ?

Henry. My Rosamund is no Lais,
 Thomas Becket ;

And yet she plagues me too — no fault
 in her —

But that I fear the Queen would have
her life. 30

Becket. Put her away, put her away,
my liege!

Put her away into a nunnery!

Safe enough there from her to whom
thou art bound

By Holy Church. And wherefore
should she seek

The life of Rosamund de Clifford more
Than that of other paramours of
thine?

Henry. How dost thou know I am
not wedded to her?

Becket. How should I know?

Henry. That is my secret, Thomas.

Becket. State secrets should be pa-
tent to the statesman

Who serves and loves his king, and
whom the king 40

Loves not as statesman, but true lover
and friend.

Henry. Come, come, thou art but
deacon, not yet bishop,

No, nor archbishop, nor my confessor
yet.

I would to God thou wert, for I should
find

An easy father confessor in thee.

Becket. Saint Denis, that thou
shouldst not. I should beat

Thy kingship as my bishop hath beaten
it.

Henry. Hell take thy bishop then,
and my kingship too!

Come, come, I love thee and I know
thee, I know thee,

A doter on white pheasant-flesh at
feasts, 50

A sauce-deviser for thy days of fish,
A dish-designer, and most amorous

Of good old red sound liberal Gascon
wine.

Will not thy body rebel, man, if thou
flatter it?

Becket. That palate is insane which
cannot tell

A good dish from a bad, new wine
from old.

Henry. Well, who loves wine loves
woman.

Becket. So I do.

Men are God's trees, and women are
God's flowers;

And when the Gascon wine mounts to
my head,

The trees are all the statelier, and the
flowers 60

Are all the fairer.

Henry. And thy thoughts, thy fan-
cies?

Becket. Good dogs, my liege, well
train'd, and easily call'd

Off from the game.

Henry. Save for some once or twice,
When they ran down the game and
worried it.

Becket. No, my liege, no! — not once
— in God's name, no!

Henry. Nay, then, I take thee at
thy word — believe thee

The veriest Galahad of old Arthur's
hall.

And so this Rosamund, my true heart-
wife,

Not Eleanor — she whom I love in-
deed

As a woman should be loved — Why
dost thou smile 70

So dolorously?

Becket. My good liege, if a man
Wastes himself among women, how
should he love

A woman as a woman should be loved?

Henry. How shouldst thou know
that never hast loved one?

Come, I would give her to thy care in
England

When I am out in Normandy or Anjou.

Becket. My lord, I am your sub-
ject, not your —

Henry. Pander.

God's eyes! I know all that — not
my purveyor

Of pleasures, but to save a life — her
life;

Ay, and the soul of Eleanor from hell-
fire. 80

I have built a secret bower in Eng-
land, Thomas,

A nest in a bush.

Becket. And where, my liege?

Henry (whispers). Thine ear.

Becket. That's lone enough.

Henry (laying paper on table). This
chart here mark'd '*Her Bower*,'

Take, keep it, friend. See, first, a
circling wood,

A hundred pathways running every-
way,

And then a brook, a bridge; and after
that

This labyrinthine brickwork maze in
maze,
And then another wood, and in the
midst
A garden and my Rosamund. Look,
this line—
The rest you see is color'd green—
but this 90
Draws thro' the chart to her.

Becket. This blood-red line?

Henry. Ay! blood, perchance, except thou see to her.

Becket. And where is she? There in her English nest?

Henry. Would God she were!—no, here within the city.

We take her from her secret bower in Anjou

And pass her to her secret bower in England.

She is ignorant of all but that I love her.

Becket. My liege, I pray thee let me hence; a widow

And orphan child, whom one of thy wild barons—

Henry. Ay, ay, but swear to see to her in England. 100

Becket. Well, well, I swear, but not to please myself.

Henry. Whatever come between us?

Becket. What should come between us, Henry?

Henry. Nay—I know not, Thomas.

Becket. What need then? Well—whatever come between us.

[*Going.*]

Henry. A moment! thou didst help me to my throne

In Theobald's time, and after by thy wisdom

Hast kept it firm from shaking; but now I,

For my realm's sake, myself must be the wizard

To raise that tempest which will set it trembling

Only to base it deeper. I, true son 110
Of Holy Church—no croucher to the Gregories

That tread the kings their children under-heel—

Must curb her; and the Holy Father, while

This Barbarossa butts him from his chair,

Will need my help—be facile to my hands.

Now is my time. Yet—lest there should be flashes

And fulminations from the side of Rome,

An interdict on England—I will have My young son Henry crown'd the

King of England,

That so the Papal bolt may pass by England, 120

As seeming his, not mine, and fall abroad.

I'll have it done—and now.

Becket. Surely too young Even for this shadow of a crown; and tho'

I love him heartily, I can spy already A strain of hard and headstrong in

him. Say,

The Queen should play his kingship against thine!

Henry. I will not think so, Thomas. Who shall crown him?

Canterbury is dying.

Becket. The next Canterbury.

Henry. And who shall he be, my friend Thomas? Who?

Becket. Name him; the Holy Father will confirm him. 130

Henry (*lays his hand on Becket's shoulder*). Here!

Becket. Mock me not. I am not even a monk.

Thy jest—no more. Why—look—is this a sleeve

For an archbishop?

Henry. But the arm within Is Becket's, who hath beaten down

my foes.

Becket. A soldier's, not a spiritual arm.

Henry. I lack a spiritual soldier, Thomas—

A man of this world and the next to boot.

Becket. There's Gilbert Foliot.

Henry. He! too thin, too thin. Thou art the man to fill out the Church

robe;

Your Foliot fasts and fawns too much for me. 140

Becket. Roger of York.

Henry. Roger is Roger of York; King, Church, and State to him but foils wherein

To set that precious jewel, Roger of York.

No.

Becket. Henry of Winchester?

Henry. Him who crown'd Stephen—

King Stephen's brother! No; too royal for me.

And I'll have no more Anselms.

Becket. Sire, the business of thy whole kingdom waits me; let me go.

Henry. Answer me first.

Becket. Then for thy barren jest Take thou mine answer in bare commonplace—

Nolo episcopari.

Henry. Ay, but *Nolo* 150

Archiepiscopari, my good friend, Is quite another matter.

Becket. A more awful one. Make me archbishop! Why, my liege, I know

Some three or four poor priests a thousand times

Fitter for this grand function. *Me* archbishop!

God's favor and king's favor might so clash

That thou and I— That were a jest indeed!

Henry. Thou angerest me, man; I do not jest.

Enter ELEANOR and SIR REGINALD FITZURSE.

ELEANOR (singing).

Over! the sweet summer closes,
The reign of the roses is done— 160

Henry (to Becket, who is going).
Thou shalt not go. I have not ended with thee.

Eleanor (seeing chart on table.) This chart with the red line! her bower! whose bower?

Henry. The chart is not mine, but Becket's; take it, Thomas.

Eleanor. Becket! O,—ay—and these chessmen on the floor—the king's crown broken! Becket hath beaten thee again—and thou hast kicked down the board. I know thee of old. 172

Henry. True enough, my mind was set upon other matters.

Eleanor. What matters? State matters? love matters?

Henry. My love for thee, and thine for me.

ELEANOR.

Over! the sweet summer closes,
The reign of the roses is done; 180
Over and gone with the roses,
And over and gone with the sun.

Here; but our sun in Aquitaine lasts longer. I would I were in Aquitaine again—your North chills me.

Over! the sweet summer closes,
And never a flower at the close;
Over and gone with the roses,
And winter again and the snows. 189

That was not the way I ended it first—but unsymmetrically, preposterously, illogically, out of passion, without art—like a song of the people. Will you have it? The last Parthian shaft of a forlorn Cupid at the King's left breast, and all left-handedness and under-handedness.

And never a flower at the close;
Over and gone with the roses,
Not over and gone with the rose. 200

True, one rose will outblossom the rest, one rose in a bower. I speak after my fancies, for I am a Troubadour, you know, and won the violet at Toulouse; but my voice is harsh here, not in tune, a nightingale out of season; for marriage, rose or no rose, has killed the golden violet.

Becket. Madam, you do ill to scorn wedded love. 210

Eleanor. So I do. Louis of France loved me, and I dreamed that I loved Louis of France; and I loved Henry of England, and Henry of England dreamed that he loved me; but the marriage-garland withers even with the putting on, the bright link rusts with the breath of the first after-marriage kiss, the harvest moon is the ripening of the harvest, and the honey-moon is the gall of Love; he dies of his honey-moon. I could pity this poor world myself that it is no better ordered. 224

Henry. Dead is he, my Queen? What, altogether? Let me swear nay

to that by this cross on thy neck. God's eyes! what a lovely cross! what jewels!

Eleanor. Doth it please you? Take it and wear it on that hard heart of yours — there. 229

Henry (*puts it on*). On this left breast before so hard a heart,
To hide the scar left by thy Parthian dart.

Eleanor. Has my simple song set you jingling? Nay, if I took and translated that hard heart into our Provençal facilities, I could so play about it with the rhyme — 239

Henry. That the heart were lost in the rhyme, — that matter in the metre. May we not pray you, madam, to spare us the hardness of your facility?

Eleanor. The wells of Castaly are not wasted upon the desert. We did but jest.

Henry. There's no jest on the brows of Herbert there. What is it, Herbert?

Enter HERBERT OF BOSHAM.

Herbert. My liege, the good archbishop is no more.

Henry. Peace to his soul! 250

Herbert. I left him with peace on his face, — that sweet other-world smile, which will be reflected in the spiritual body among the angels. But he longed much to see your Grace and the Chancellor ere he past, and his last words were a commendation of Thomas Becket to your Grace as his successor in the archbishopric.

Henry. Ha, Becket! thou rememberest our talk! 260

Becket. My heart is full of tears — I have no answer.

Henry. Well, well, old men must die, or the world would grow mouldy, would only breed the past again. Come to me to-morrow. Thou hast but to hold out thy hand. Meanwhile the revenues are mine. A-hawking, a-hawking! If I sit, I grow fat.

[Leaps over the table, and exit.]

Becket. He did prefer me to the chancellorship, Believing I should ever aid the Church — 270

But have I done it? He commends me now

From out his grave to this archbishopric.

Herbert. A dead man's dying wish should be of weight.

Becket. His should. Come with me. Let me learn at full

The manner of his death, and all he said.

[Exeunt Herbert and Becket.]

Eleanor. Fitzurse, that chart with the red line — thou sawest it — her bower.

Fitzurse. Rosamund's? 279

Eleanor. Ay — there lies the secret of her whereabouts, and the King gave it to his Chancellor.

Fitzurse. To this son of a London merchant — how your Grace must hate him!

Eleanor. Hate him? as brave a soldier as Henry and a goodlier man: but thou — dost thou love this Chancellor, that thou hast sworn a voluntary allegiance to him? 290

Fitzurse. Not for my love toward him, but because he had the love of the King. How should a baron love a beggar on horseback, with the retinue of three kings behind him, out-royalling royalty? Besides, he help the King to break down our castles, for the which I hate him. 298

Eleanor. For the which I honor him. Statesman, not Churchman, he. A great and sound policy that; I could embrace him for it: you could not see the King for the kinglings.

Fitzurse. Ay, but he speaks to a noble as tho' he were a churl, and to a churl as if he were a noble.

Eleanor. Pride of the plebeian!

Fitzurse. And this plebeian like to be Archbishop! 309

Eleanor. True, and I have an inherited loathing of these black sheep of the Papacy. Archbishop? I can see further into a man than our hot-headed Henry, and if there ever come feud between Church and Crown, and I do not then charm this secret out of our loyal Thomas, I am not Eleanor. 317

Fitzurse. Last night I followed a woman in the city here. Her face was veiled, but the back methought was Rosamund — his paramour, thy rival. I can feel for thee.

Eleanor. Thou feel for me! — paramour — rival! King Louis had no paramours, and I loved him none the more. Henry had many, and I loved him none the less — now neither more nor less — not at all; the cup's empty. I would she were but his paramour, for men tire of their fancies; but I fear this one fancy hath taken root, and borne blossom too, and she, whom the King loves indeed, is a power in the State. Rival! — ay, and when the King passes, there may come a crash and embroilment as in Stephen's time; and her children — canst thou not — that secret matter which would heat the King against thee (*whispers him and he starts*). Nay, that is safe with me as with thyself; but canst thou not — thou art drowned in debt — thou shalt have our love, our silence, and our gold — canst thou not — if thou light upon her — free me from her? 345

Fitzurse. Well, madam, I have loved her in my time.

Eleanor. No, my bear, thou hast not. My Courts of Love would have held thee guiltless of love — the fine attractions and repulses, the delicacies, the subtleties.

Fitzurse. Madam, I loved according to the main purpose and intent of Nature. 355

Eleanor. I warrant thee! thou wouldst hug thy Cupid till his ribs cracked — enough of this. Follow me this Rosamund day and night, whithersoever she goes; track her, if thou canst, even into the King's lodging, that I may (*clenches her fist*) — may at least have my cry against him and her, — and thou in thy way shouldst be jealous of the King, for thou in thy way didst once, what shall I call it, affect her thine own self. 367

Fitzurse. Ay, but the young colt winced and whinnied and flung up her heels; and then the King came honeying about her, and this Becket, her father's friend, like enough staved us from her.

Eleanor. Us!

Fitzurse. Yea, by the Blessed Virgin! There were more than I buzzing round the blossom — De Tracy — even that flint De Brito. 378

Eleanor. Carry her off among you; run in upon her and devour her, one and all of you; make her as hateful to herself and to the King as she is to me.

Fitzurse. I and all would be glad to wreak our spite on the rose-faced minion of the King, and bring her to the level of the dust, so that the King —

Eleanor. Let her eat it like the serpent, and be driven out of her paradise.

ACT I

SCENE I. — BECKET'S HOUSE IN LONDON

Chamber barely furnished. BECKET unrobing. HERBERT OF BOSHAM and SERVANT.

Servant. Shall I not help your lordship to your rest?

Becket. Friend, am I so much better than thyself

That thou shouldst help me? Thou art wearied out

With this day's work; get thee to thine own bed.

Leave me with Herbert, friend.

[*Erit Servant.*
Help me off, Herbert, with this — and this.

Herbert. Was not the people's blessing as we passed
Heart-comfort and a balsam to thy blood?

Becket. The people know their Church a tower of strength,
A bulwark against Throne and Baron age. 10

Too heavy for me, this; off with it, Herbert!

Herbert. Is it so much heavier than thy chancellor's robe?

Becket. No; but the Chancellor's and the Archbishop's
Together more than mortal man can bear.

Herbert. Not heavier than thine armor at Toulouse?

Becket. O Herbert, Herbert, in my chancellorship
I more than once have gone against the Church.

Herbert. To please the King?

Becket. Ay, and the King of kings,

Or justice; for it seem'd to me but
just

The Church should pay her scutage
like the lords. ²⁰

But hast thou heard this cry of Gilbert
Foliot

That I am not the man to be your pri-
mate,

For Henry could not work a miracle —
Make an archbishop of a soldier?

Herbert. Ay,
For Gilbert Foliot held himself the
man.

Becket. Am I the man? My mother,
ere she bore me,

Dream'd that twelve stars fell glitter-
ing out of heaven

Into her bosom.

Herbert. Ay, the fire, the light,
The spirit of the twelve Apostles en-
ter'd

Into thy making.

Becket. And when I was a child,
The Virgin, in a vision of my sleep, ³¹
Gave me the golden keys of Paradise.

Dream,
Or prophecy, that?

Herbert. Well, dream and prophecy
both.

* *Becket.* And when I was of Theo-
bald's household, once —

The good old man would sometimes
have his jest —

He took his mitre off, and set it on me.
And said, 'My young archbishop —

thou wouldst make
A stately archbishop!' Jest or pro-
phesy there?

Herbert. Both, Thomas, both.

Becket. Am I the man? That rang
Within my head last night, and when

I slept ⁴⁰
Methought I stood in Canterbury
Minster,

And spake to the Lord God, and said,
'O Lord,

I have been a lover of wines, and deli-
cate meats,

And secular splendors, and a favorer
Of players, and a courtier, and a feeder

Of dogs and hawks, and apes, and
lions, and lynxes.

'Am I the man?' And the Lord an-
swer'd me,

'Thou art the man, and all the more
the man'

And then I asked again, 'O Lord my
God,

Henry the King hath been my friend,
my brother, ⁵⁰

And mine uplifter in this world, and
chosen me

For this thy great archbishopric, be
lieving

That I should go against the Church
with him,

And I shall go against him with the
Church,

And I have said no word of this to him.
Am I the man?' And the Lord an-
swer'd me,

'Thou art the man, and all the more
the man.'

And thereupon, methought, He drew
toward me,

And smote me down upon the minster
floor.

I fell.

Herbert. God make not thee, but
thy foes, fall! ⁶⁰

Becket. I fell. Why fall? Why
did He smite me? What?

Shall I fall off — to please the King
once more?

Not fight — tho' somehow traitor to
the King —

My truest and mine utmost for the
Church?

Herbert. Thou canst not fall that
way. Let traitor be;

For how have fought thine utmost
for the Church,

Save from the throne of thine arch-
bishopric?

And how been made archbishop hadst
thou told him,

'I mean to fight mine utmost for the
Church,

Against the King?'

Becket. But dost thou think the
King ⁷⁰
Forced mine election?

Herbert. I do think the King
Was potent in the election, and why
not?

Why should not Heaven have so in-
spired the King?

Be comforted. Thou art the man —
be thou

A mightier Anselm.

Becket. I do believe thee, then. I
am the man.

And yet I seem appall'd — on such a sudden

At such an eagle-height I stand and see

The rift that runs between me and the King.

I served our Theobald well when I was with him; 80

I served King Henry well as Chancellor;

I am his no more, and I must serve the Church.

This Canterbury is only less than Rome,

And all my doubts I fling from me like dust,

Winnow and scatter all scruples to the wind,

And all the puissance of the warrior, And all the wisdom of the Chancellor,

And all the heap'd experiences of life,

I cast upon the side of Canterbury — Our holy mother Canterbury, who sits

With tatter'd robes. Laics and barons, thro' 91

The random gifts of careless kings, have graspt

Her livings, her advowsons, granges, farms,

And goodly acres — we will make her whole;

Not one rood lost. And for these Royal customs,

These ancient Royal customs — they are Royal,

Not of the Church — and let them be anathema.

And all that speak for them anathema.

Herbert. Thomas, thou art moved too much.

Becket. O Herbert, here I gash myself asunder from the King,

Tho' leaving each, a wound; mine own, a grief 101

To show the scar for ever — his, a hate

Not ever to be heal'd.

Enter ROSAMUND DE CLIFFORD, flying from SIR REGINALD FITZURSE.

Drops her veil.

Becket. Rosamund de Clifford!

Rosamund. Save me, father, hide me — they follow me — and I must not be known.

Becket. Pass in with Herbert there.

[Exeunt Rosamund and Herbert by side door.]

Enter FITZURSE.

Fitzurse. The archbishop!

Becket. Ay! what wouldst thou, Reginald?

Fitzurse. Why — why, my lord, I follow'd — follow'd one

Becket. And then what follows? Let me follow thee. 110

Fitzurse. It much imports me I should know her name.

Becket. What her?

Fitzurse. The woman that I follow'd hither.

Becket. Perhaps it may import her all as much

Not to be known.

Fitzurse. And what care I for that? Come, come, my lord archbishop; I saw that door

Close even now upon the woman.

Becket. Well?

Fitzurse (making for the door). Nay, let me pass, my lord, for I must know.

Becket. Back, man!

Fitzurse. Then tell me who and what she is.

Becket. Art thou so sure thou followedst anything?

Go home, and sleep thy wine off, for thine eyes 120

Glare stupid-wild with wine.

Fitzurse (making to the door). I must and will.

I care not for thy new archbishopric.

Becket. Back, man, I tell thee! What! Shall I forget my new archbishopric

And smite thee with my crozier on the skull?

'Fore God, I am a mightier man than thou.

Fitzurse. It well befits thy new archbishopric

To take the vagabond woman of the street

Into thine arms!

Becket. O drunken ribaldry! Out, beast! out, bear!

Fitzurse. I shall remember this.

Becket. Do, and begone!

[Exit Fitzurse.]

[Going to the door, sees De Tracy.] Tracy, what dost thou here?

De Tracy. My lord, I follow'd Re-
ginald Fitzurse. 132

Becket. Follow him out!

De Tracy. I shall remember this
Discourtesy. [*Exit.*]

Becket. Do. These be those baron-
brutes
That havock'd all the land in Stephen's
day.

Rosamund de Clifford!

Re-enter ROSAMUND and HERBERT.

Rosamund. Here am I.

Becket. Why here?
We gave thee to the charge of John
of Salisbury,

To pass thee to thy secret bower to-
morrow.

Wast thou not told to keep thyself
from sight?

Rosamund. Poor bird of passage!
so I was; but, father, 140

They say that you are wise in winged
things,

And know the ways of Nature. Bar
the bird

From following the fled summer—a
chink—he's out,

Gone! And there stole into the city
a breath

Full of the meadows, and it minded me
Of the sweet woods of Clifford, and
the walks

Where I could move at pleasure, and
I thought

'Lo! I must out or die.'

Becket. Or out and die.
And what hast thou to do with this
Fitzurse?

Rosamund. Nothing. He sued my
hand. I shook at him. 150

He found me once alone. Nay—nay
—I cannot

Tell you. My father drove him and
his friends,

De Tracy and De Brito, from our
castle.

I was but fourteen and an April then.
I heard him swear revenge.

Becket. Why will you court it
By self-exposure? flutter out at night?
Make it so hard to save a moth from
the fire?

Rosamund. I have saved many of
'em. You catch 'em, so,
Softly, and fling them out to the free
air.

They burn themselves *within*-door.

Becket. Our good John
Must speed you to your bower at once.

The child 161
Is there already.

Rosamund. Yes—the child—the
child—

O, rare, a whole long day of open field!

Becket. Ay, but you go disguised.

Rosamund. O, rare again!

We'll baffle them, I warrant. What
shall it be?

I'll go as a nun.

Becket. No.

Rosamund. What, not good enough
Even to play at nun?

Becket. Dan John with a nun,
That Map and these new railers at the
Church

May plaister his clean name with
scurrilous rhymes!

No! 170
Go like a monk, cowling and clouding
up

That fatal star, thy beauty, from the
squint

Of lust and glare of malice. Good-
night! Good-night!

Rosamund. Father, I am so tender
to all hardness!

Nay, father, first thy blessing.

Becket. Wedded?

Rosamund. Father!

Becket. Well, well! I ask no more.
Heaven bless thee! hence!

Rosamund. O holy father, when
thou seest him next,
Commend me to thy friend.

Becket. What friend?

Rosamund. The King.

Becket. Herbert, take out a score of
armed men

To guard this bird of passage to her
cage; 180

And watch Fitzurse, and if he follow
thee,

Make him thy prisoner. I am Chan-
cellor yet.

[*Exeunt Herbert and Rosamund.*
Poor soul! poor soul!

My friend, the King!—O thou Great
Seal of England,

Given me by my dear friend, the King
of England—
We long have wrought together, thou
and I—

Now must I send thee as a common friend

To tell the King, my friend, I am against him.

We are friends no more; he will say that, not I.

The worldly bond between us is dissolved,

Not yet the love. Can I be under him ¹⁹⁰

As Chancellor? as Archbishop over him?

Go therefore like a friend slighted by one

That hath climb'd up to nobler company.

Not slighted—all but moan'd for. Thou must go.

I have not dishonor'd thee—I trust I have not—

Not mangled justice. May the hand that next

Inherits thee be but as true to thee As mine hath been! O, my dear friend,

the King!

O brother!—I may come to martyrdom.

I am martyr in myself already. Herbert!

Herbert (re-entering). My lord, the town is quiet, and the moon Divides the whole long street with light and shade.

No footfall—no Fitzurse. We have seen her home.

Becket. The hog hath tumbled himself into some corner,

Some ditch, to snore away his drunkenness

Into the sober headache,—Nature's moral

Against excess. Let the Great Seal be sent

Back to the King to-morrow.

Herbert. Must that be? The King may rend the bearer limb

from limb. ²¹⁰

Think on it again.

Becket. Against the moral excess No physical ache, but failure it may be

Of all we aim'd at. John of Salisbury

Hath often laid a cold hand on my heats,

And Herbert hath rebuked me even now.

I will be wise and wary, not the soldier

As Foliot swears it. — John, and out of breath!

Enter JOHN OF SALISBURY.

John of Salisbury. Thomas, thou wast not happy taking charge

Of this wild Rosamund to please the King,

Nor am I happy having charge of her—

The included Danaë has escaped again ²²⁰

Her tower and her Acrisius—where to seek?

I have been about the city.

Becket. Thou wilt find her Back in her lodging. Go with her—

at once—

To-night—my men will guard you to the gates.

Be sweet to her, she has many enemies.

Send the Great Seal by daybreak. Both, good-night!

SCENE II

STREET IN NORTHAMPTON LEADING TO THE CASTLE

ELEANOR'S RETAINERS and BECKET'S RETAINERS fighting. *Enter ELEANOR and BECKET from opposite streets.*

Eleanor. Peace, fools!

Becket. Peace, friends! what idle brawl is this?

Retainer of Becket. They said—her Grace's people—thou wast found—

Liars! I shame to quote 'em—caught, my lord,

With a wanton in thy lodging—Hell requite 'em!

Retainer of Eleanor. My liege, the Lord Fitzurse reported this

In passing to the Castle even now.

Retainer of Becket. And then they mock'd us and we fell upon 'em,

For we would live and die for thee, my lord,

However kings and queens may frown on thee.

Becket to his Retainers. Go, go —
no more of this!

Eleanor to her Retainers. Away!
(*Exeunt Retainers.*) Fitzurse —

Becket. Nay, let him be.

Eleanor. No, no, my lord arch-
bishop,

'Tis known you are midwinter to all
women,
But often in your chancellorship you
served
The follies of the King.

Becket. No, not these follies!

Eleanor. My lord, Fitzurse beheld
her in your lodging.

Becket. Whom?

Eleanor. Well — you know — the
minion, Rosamund.

Becket. He had good eyes!

Eleanor. Then hidden in the street
He watch'd her pass with John of
Salisbury,
And heard her cry, 'Where is this
bower of mine?'

Becket. Good ears too!

Eleanor. You are going to the
Castle,

Will you subscribe the customs?

Becket. I leave that,
Knowing how much you reverence
Holy Church,
My liege, to your conjecture.

Eleanor. I and mine —
And many a baron holds along with
me —
Are not so much at feud with Holy
Church
But we might take your side against
the customs —
So that you grant me one slight favor.

Becket. What?

Eleanor. A sight of that same
chart which Henry gave you
With the red line — 'her bower.'

Becket. And to what end?

Eleanor. That Church must scorn
herself whose fearful priest
Sits winking at the license of a king,
Altho' we grant when kings are dan-
gerous
The Church must play into the hands
of kings;
Look! I would move this wanton from
his sight
And take the Church's danger on my-
self.

Becket. For which she should be
duly grateful.

Eleanor. True!
Tho' she that binds the bond, herself
should see
That kings are faithful to their mar-
riage vow.

Becket. Ay, madam, and queens
also.

Eleanor. And queens also!

What is your drift?

Becket. My drift is to the Castle,
Where I shall meet the barons and
my King.

DE BROC, DE TRACY, DE BRITO,
DE MORVILLE (*passing*).

Eleanor. To the Castle?

De Broc. Ay!

Eleanor. Stir up the King, the lords!
Set all on fire against him!

De Brito. Ay, good madam!

Eleanor. Fool! I will make thee
hateful to thy King.
Churl! I will have thee frightened into
France,
And I shall live to trample on thy
grave.

SCENE III

THE HALL IN NORTHAMPTON CASTLE

*On one side of the stage the doors of an
inner Council-chamber, half-open.
At the bottom, the great doors of
the Hall.* ROGER ARCHBISHOP OF
YORK, FOLIO BISHOP OF LONDON,
HILARY OF CHICHESTER, BISHOP
OF HEREFORD, RICHARD DE HAST-
INGS (*Grand Prior of Templars*),
PHILIP DE ELEEMOSYNA (*the Pope's
Almoner*), and others. DE BROC,
FITZURSE, DE BRITO, DE MOR-
VILLE, DE TRACY, and other BAR-
ONS assembled — a table before them.
JOHN OF OXFORD, *President of the
Council.*

*Enter BECKET and HERBERT OF BO-
SHAM.*

Becket. Where is the King?

Roger of York. Gone hawking on
the Nene,
His heart so gall'd with thine ingrati-
tude.

He will not see thy face till thou hast
sign'd

These ancient laws and customs of
the realm.

Thy sending back the Great Seal
madden'd him;

He all but pluck'd the bearer's eyes
away.

Take heed lest he destroy thee utterly.

Becket. Then shalt thou step into
my place and sign.

Roger of York. Didst thou not pro-
mise Henry to obey

These ancient laws and customs of
the realm? ¹⁰

Becket. Saving the honor of my or-
der—ay.

Customs, traditions, — clouds that
come and go;

The customs of the Church are Peter's
rock.

Roger of York. Saving thine order!
But King Henry sware

That, saving his King's kingship, he
would grant thee

The crown itself. Saving thine order,
Thomas,

Is black and white at once, and comes
to nought.

O bolster'd up with stubbornness and
pride,

Wilt thou destroy the Church in fight-
ing for it,

And bring us all to shame?

Becket. *Roger of York,*
When I and thou were youths in

Theobald's house, ²¹

Twice did thy malice and thy cal-
umnies

Exile me from the face of Theobald.

Now I am Canterbury, and thou art
York.

Roger of York. And is not York the
peer of Canterbury?

Did not Great Gregory bid Saint
Austin here

Found two archbishoprics, London
and York?

Becket. What came of that? The
first archbishop fled,

And York lay barren for a hundred
years.

Why, by this rule, Foliot may claim
the pall ³⁰

For London too.

Foliot And with good reason too,

For London had a temple and a priest
When Canterbury hardly bore a name.

Becket. The pagan temple of a
pagan Rome!

The heathen priesthood of a heathen
creed!

Thou goest beyond thyself in petu-
lancy!

Who made thee London? Who, but
Canterbury?

John of Oxford. Peace, peace, my
lords! these customs are no
longer

As Canterbury calls them, wandering
clouds,

But by the King's command are writ-
ten down, ⁴⁰

And by the King's command I, John
of Oxford,

The President of this Council, read
them.

Becket. Read!

John of Oxford (reads). 'All causes of
advowsons and presentations, whether
between laymen or clerics, shall be
tried in the King's court.'

Becket. But that I cannot sign; for
that would drag

The cleric before the civil judgment-
seat,

And on a matter wholly spiritual. ⁴⁹

John of Oxford. 'If any cleric be
accused of felony, the Church shall
not protect him; but he shall answer
to the summons of the King's court to
be tried therein.'

Becket. And that I cannot sign.

Is not the Church the visible Lord on
earth?

Shall hands that do create the Lord
be bound

Behind the back like laymen-criminals?
The Lord be judged again by Pilate?

No! ⁵⁹

John of Oxford. 'When a bishopric
falls vacant, the King, till another be
appointed, shall receive the revenues
thereof.'

Becket. And that I cannot sign. Is
the King's treasury

A fit place for the moneys of the
Church,

That be the patrimony of the poor?

John of Oxford. 'And when the va-
cancy is to be filled up, the King shall
summon the chapter of that church to

court, and the election shall be made in the Chapel Royal, with the consent of our lord the King, and by the advice of his Government.' ⁷³

Becket. And that I cannot sign; for that would make
Our island-Church a schism from Christendom,
And weight down all free choice beneath the throne.

Foliot. And was thine own election so canonical,
Good father?

Becket. If it were not, Gilbert Foliot,
I mean to cross the sea to France, and lay

My crozier in the Holy Father's hands,
And bid him re-create me, Gilbert Foliot. ⁸¹

Foliot. Nay; by another of these customs thou
Wilt not be suffer'd so to cross the seas
Without the license of our lord the King.

Becket. That, too, I cannot sign.
DE BROU, DE BRITO, DE TRACY,
FITZURSE, DE MORVILLE, start up
— a clash of swords.

Sign and obey!
Becket. My lords, is this a combat or a council?

Are ye my masters, or my lord the King?

Ye make this clashing for no love o' the customs

Or constitutions, or whate'er ye call them,

But that there be among you those that hold ⁹⁰

Lands reft from Canterbury.
De Broc. And mean to keep them,
In spite of thee!

Lords (shouting). Sign, and obey the crown!

Becket. The crown? Shall I do less for Canterbury
Than Henry for the crown? King Stephen gave

Many of the crown lands to those that helpt him;

So did Matilda, the King's mother. Mark,

When Henry came into his own again,
Then he took back not only Stephen's gifts,

But his own mother's, lest the crown should be

Shorn of ancestral splendor. This did Henry. ¹⁰⁰

Shall I do less for mine own Canterbury?

And thou, De Broc, that holdest Saltwood Castle—

De Broc. And mean to hold it, or—
Becket. To have my life.

De Broc. The King is quick to anger; if thou anger him,

We wait but the King's word to strike thee dead.

Becket. Strike, and I die the death of martyrdom;

Strike, and ye set these customs by my death

Ringin' their own death-knell thro' all the realm.

Herbert. And I can tell you, lords, ye are all as like

To lodge a fear in Thomas Becket's heart ¹¹⁰

As find a hare's form in a lion's cave.
John of Oxford. Ay, sheathe your

swords, ye will displease the King.

De Broc. Why, down then thou! but an he come to Saltwood,

By God's death, thou shalt stick him like a calf! [*Sheathing his sword.*]

Hilary. O my good lord, I do entreat thee—sign.

Save the King's honor here before his barons.

He hath sworn that thou shouldst sign, and now but shuns

The semblance of defeat; I have heard him say

He means no more; so if thou sign, my lord,

That were but as the shadow of an assent. ¹²⁰

Becket. 'T would seem too like the substance, if I sign'd.

Philip de Eleemosyna. My lord, thine ear! I have the ear of the Pope.

As thou hast honor for the Pope our master,

Have pity on him, sorely prest upon By the fierce Emperor and his Anti-pope.

Thou knowest he was forced to fly to France;

He pray'd me to pray thee to pacify

Thy King; for if thou go against thy King,

Then must he likewise go against thy King,

And then thy King might join the Antipope,

And that would shake the Papacy as it stands.

Besides, thy King swore to our cardinals

He meant no harm nor damage to the Church.

Smoothe thou his pride — thy signing is but form;

Nay, and should harm come of it, it is the Pope

Will be to blame — not thou. Over and over

He told me thou shouldst pacify the King,

Lest there be battle between Heaven and Earth,

And Earth should get the better — for the time.

Cannot the Pope absolve thee if thou sign?

Becket. Have I the orders of the Holy Father?

Philip de Eleemosyna. Orders, my lord — why, no; for what am I?

The secret whisper of the Holy Father. Thou, that hast been a statesman, couldst thou always

Blurt thy free mind to the air?

Becket. If Rome be feeble, then should I be firm.

Philip. Take it not that way — balk not the Pope's will.

When he hath shaken off the Emperor,

He heads the Church against the King with thee.

Richard de Hastings (kneeling).

Becket, I am the oldest of the Templars;

I knew thy father; he would be mine age

Had he lived now; think of me as thy father!

Behold thy father kneeling to thee, Becket.

Submit; I promise thee on my salvation

That thou wilt hear no more o' the customs.

Becket. What!

Hath Henry told thee? hast thou talk'd with him?

Another Templar (kneeling). Father, I am the youngest of the Templars,

Look on me as I were thy bodily son, For, like a son, I lift my hands to thee.

Philip. Wilt thou hold out forever, Thomas Becket?

Dost thou not hear?

Becket (signs). Why — there then — there — I sign,

And swear to obey the customs.

Foliot. Is it thy will,

My lord archbishop, that we too should sign?

Becket. O, ay, by that canonical obedience

Thou still hast owed thy father, Gilbert Foliot.

Foliot. Loyally and with good faith, my lord archbishop?

Becket. O, ay, with all that loyalty and good faith

Thou still hast shown thy primate, Gilbert Foliot.

[*Becket draws apart with Herbert.* Herbert, Herbert, have I betray'd the Church?

I'll have the paper back — blot out my name.

Herbert. Too late, my lord: you see they are signing there.

Becket. False to myself — it is the will of God

To break me, prove me nothing of myself!

This almoner hath tasted Henry's gold. The cardinals have finger'd Henry's gold.

And Rome is venal even to rottenness. I see it, I see it.

I am no soldier, as he said — at least No leader. Herbert, till I hear from the Pope

I will suspend myself from all my functions.

If fast and prayer, the lacerating scourge —

Foliot (from the table). My lord archbishop, thou hast yet to seal.

Becket. First, Foliot, let me see what I have sign'd. [*Goes to the table.*

What, this! and this! — what! new and old together!

Seal? If a seraph shouted from the sun,
And bade me seal against the rights of the Church,
I would anathematize him. I will not seal! [*Exit with Herbert.*]

Enter KING HENRY.

Henry. Where's Thomas? hath he signed? show me the papers!
Sign'd and not seal'd! How's that?

John of Oxford. He would not seal.

And when he sign'd, his face was stormy-red — ¹⁹⁰

Shame, wrath, I know not what. He sat down there

And dropt it in his hands, and then a paleness,

Like the wan twilight after sunset, crept

Upeven to the tonsure, and he groan'd, 'False to myself! It is the will of God!'

Henry. God's will be what it will, the man shall seal,

Or I will seal his doom. My burgher's son —

Nay, if I cannot break him as the prelate,

I'll crush him as the subject. Send for him back. [*Sits on his throne.*]

Barons and bishops of our realm of England, ²⁰⁰

After the nineteen winters of King Stephen —

A reign which was no reign, when none could sit

By his own hearth in peace; when murder common

As nature's death, like Egypt's plague, had fill'd

All things with blood; when every doorway blush'd,

Dash'd red with that unhallow'd pass-over;

When every baron ground his blade in blood;

The household dough was kneaded up with blood;

The mill-wheel turn'd in blood; the wholesome plow

Lay rusting in the furrow's yellow weeds, ²¹⁰

Till famine dwarf'd the race — I came, your King!

Nor dwelt alone, like a soft lord of the East,

In mine own hall, and sucking thro' fools' ears

The flatteries of corruption — went abroad

Thro' all my counties, spied my people's ways;

Yea, heard the churl against the baron — yea,

And did him justice; sat in mine own courts

Judging my judges, that had found a King

Who rang'd confusions, made the twilight day,

And struck a shape from out the vague, and law ²²⁰

From madness. And the event — our fallows till'd,

Much corn, repeopled towns, a realm again.

So far my course, albeit not glassy-smooth,

Had prosper'd in the main, but suddenly

Jarr'd on this rock. A cleric violated

The daughter of his host, and murder'd him.

Bishops — York, London, Chichester, Westminster —

Ye haled this tinsured devil into your courts;

But since your canon will not let you take

Life for a life, ye but degraded him Where I had hang'd him. What doth

hard murder care ²³¹

For degradation? and that made me muse,

Being bounden by my coronation oath To do men justice. Look to it, your

own selves!

Say that a cleric murder'd an archbishop,

What could ye do? Degrade, imprison him —

Not death for death.

John of Oxford. But I, my liege, could swear,

To death for death.

Henry. And, looking thro' my reign, I found a hundred ghastly murders done

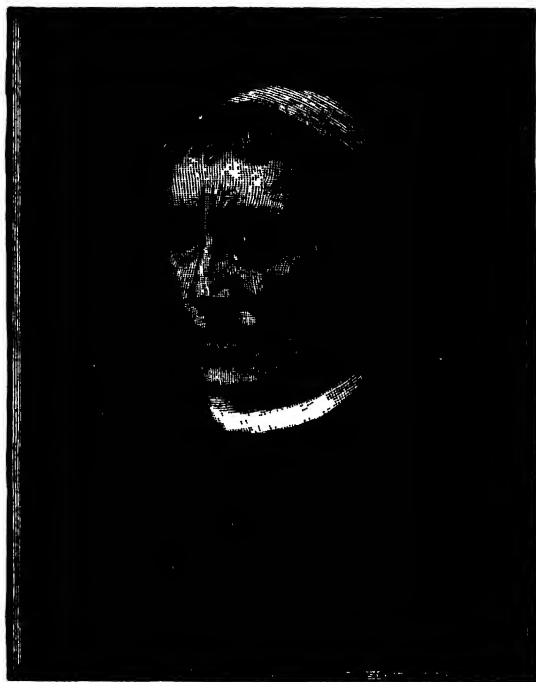
By men, the scum and offal of the Church; ¹⁴⁰

Then, glancing thro' the story of this realm,

I came on certain wholesome usages,

Lost in desuetude, of my grandsire's
day,
Good royal customs—had them writ-
ten fair
For John of Oxford here to read to you.
John of Oxford. And I can easily
swear to these as being
The King's will and God's will and
justice; yet

Henry. And Becket had my bosom
on all this;
If ever man by bonds of gratefulness—
I raised him from the puddle of the
gutter,
I made him porcelain from the clay of
the city—
Thought that I knew him, err'd thro'
love of him,



SIR HENRY IRVING AS BECKET

I could but read a part to-day, be-
cause—

Fitzurse. Because my lord of Can-
terbury—

De Tracy. Ay,
This lord of Canterbury—

De Brito. As is his wont
Too much of late whene'er your royal
rights

Are mooted in our councils—
Fitzurse. —made an uproar.

Hoped, were he chosen archbishop,
Church and Crown,

Two sisters gliding in an equal
dance,

Two rivers gently flowing side by
side—

But no! 261
The bird that moults sings the same
song again,

The snake that sloughs comes out a
snake again.

SNAKE — ay, but he that lookt a fang-
less one

Issues a venomous adder.

For he, when having doff't the Chan-
cellor's robe

Flung the Great Seal of England in
my face —

Claim'd some of our crown lands for
Canterbury —

My comrade, boon companion, my co-
reveller,

The master of his master, the King's
king. — ²⁷⁰

God's eyes! I had meant to make
him all but king.

Chancellor-Archbishop, he might well
have sway'd

All England under Henry, the young
King,

When I was hence. What did the
traitor say?

False to himself, but ten-fold false to
me!

The will of God — why, then it is my
will —

Is he coming?

Messenger (entering). With a crowd
of worshippers,

And holds his cross before him thro'
the crowd,

As one that puts himself in sanctuary.

Henry. His cross!

Roger of York. His cross! I'll front
him, cross to cross. ²⁸⁰

[*Exit Roger of York.*]

Henry. His cross! it is the traitor
that imputes

Treachery to his King!

It is not safe for me to look upon him.

Away — with me!

[*Goes in with his Barons to the
Council Chamber, the door of
which is left open.*]

*Enter BECKET, holding his cross of sil-
ver before him. The BISHOPS come
round him.*

Hereford. The King will not abide
thee with thy cross.

Permit me, my good lord, to bear it
for thee,

Being thy chaplain.

Becket. No; it must protect me.

Herbert. As once he bore the stand-
ard of the Angles,

So now he bears the standard of the
angels.

Foliot. I am the dean of the prov-
ince; let me bear it. ²⁹⁰

Make not thy King a traitorous mur-
derer.

Becket. Did not your barons draw
their swords against me?

*Enter ROGER OF YORK, with his cross,
advancing to BECKET.*

Becket. Wherefore dost thou pre-
sume to bear thy cross,
Against the solemn ordinance from
Rome,

Out of thy province?

Roger of York. Why dost thou pre-
sume,

Arm'd with thy cross, to come before
the King?

If Canterbury bring his cross to court,
Let York bear his to mate with Can-
terbury.

Foliot (seizing hold of Becket's cross).

Nay, nay, my lord, thou must
not brave the King.

Nay, let me have it. I will have it!

Becket. ^{Away!}
[*Flinging him off.*]

Foliot. He fasts, they say, this mi-
tred Hercules! ³⁰¹

He fast! is that an arm of fast? My
lord,

Hadst thou not sign'd, I had gone
along with thee;

But thou the shepherd hast betray'd
the sheep,

And thou art perjured, and thou wilt
not seal.

As Chancellor thou wast against the
Church,

Now as archbishop goest against the
King;

For, like a fool, thou know'st no mid-
dle way.

Ay, ay! but art thou stronger than
the King?

Becket. Strong — not in mine own
self, but Heaven; true ³¹⁰

To either function, holding it; and
thou

Fast, scourge thyself, and mortify thy
flesh,

Not spirit — thou remainest Gilbert
Foliot,

A worldly follower of the worldly
strong.

I, bearing this great ensign, make it
clear

Under what prince I fight.

Foliot. My lord of York,
Let us go in to the Council, where our
bishops

And our great lords will sit in judgment on him.

Becket. Sons sit in judgment on
their father! — then

The spire of Holy Church may prick
the graves —

Her crypt among the stars. Sign? ³²⁰
seal? I promised

The King to obey these customs, not
yet written,

Saving mine order; true, too, that
when written

I sign'd them — being a fool, as Foliot
call'd me.

I hold not by my signing. Get ye
hence,

Tell what I say to the King.

[*Exeunt* Hereford, Foliot, and
other Bishops.

Roger of York. The Church will
hate thee. [*Exit.*

Becket. Serve my best friend and
make him my worst foe;

Fight for the Church, and set the
Church against me!

Herbert. To be honest is to set all
knaves against thee.

Ah, Thomas, excommunicate them
all! ³³⁰

Hereford (re-entering). I cannot
brook the turmoil thou hast
raised.

I would, my lord Thomas of Canter-
bury,

Thou wert plain Thomas and not Can-
terbury,

Or that thou wouldst deliver Canter-
bury

To our King's hands again, and be at
peace.

Hilary (re-entering). For hath not
thine ambition set the Church

This day between the hammer and
the anvil —

Faalty to the King, obedience to thy-
self?

Herbert. What say the bishops?

Hilary. Some have pleaded for him,
But the King rages — most are with

the King; ³⁴⁰
And some are reeds, that one time
sway to the current,

And to the wind another. But we
hold

Thou art forsworn; and no forsworn
archbishop

Shall helm the Church. We therefore
place ourselves

Under the shield and safeguard of the
Pope,

And cite thee to appear before the
Pope,

And answer thine accusers. Art
thou deaf?

Becket. I hear you. [*Clash of arms.*

Hilary. Dost thou hear those others?

Becket. Ay!

Roger of York (re-entering). The

King's 'God's eyes!' come now
so thick and fast

We fear that he may reave thee of
thine own. ³⁵⁰

Come on, come on! it is not fit for us
To see the proud archbishop mutilated.

Say that he blind thee and tear out
thy tongue.

Becket. So be it. He begins at top
with me;

They crucified Saint Peter downward.

Roger of York. Nay,

But for their sake who stagger betwixt
thine

Appeal and Henry's anger, yield.

Becket. Hence, Satan!

[*Exit* Roger of York.

Fitzurse (re-entering). My lord, the
King demands three hundred

marks,

Due from his castles of Berkhamstead
and Eye

When thou thereof wast warden.

Becket. Tell the King

I spent thrice that in fortifying his
castles. ³⁶⁰

De Tracy (re-entering). My lord, the
King demands seven hundred

marks,

Lent at the siege of Toulouse by the
King.

Becket. I led seven hundred knights
and fought his wars.

De Brito (re-entering). My lord,
the King demands five hundred

marks,

Advanced thee at his instance by the
Jews,

For which the King was bound secur-
ity.

Becket. I thought it was a gift; I thought it was a gift.

Enter LORD LEICESTER (followed by BARONS and BISHOPS).

Leicester. My lord, I come unwillingly. The King Demands a strict account of all those revenues³⁷⁰ From all the vacant sees and abbacies, Which came into thy hands when Chancellor.

Becket. How much might that amount to, my lord Leicester?

Leicester. Some thirty — forty thousand silver marks.

Becket. Are these your customs? O my good lord Leicester, The King and I were brothers. All I had

I lavish'd for the glory of the King; I shone from him, for him, his glory, his

Reflection. Now the glory of the Church

Hath swallow'd up the glory of the King;³⁸⁰

I am his no more, but hers. Grant me one day

To ponder these demands.

Leicester. Hear first thy sentence! The King and all his lords —

Becket. Son, first hear me!

Leicester. Nay, nay, canst thou, that holdest thine estates In fee and barony of the King, decline

The judgment of the King?

Becket. The King! I hold Nothing in fee and barony of the King.

Whatever the Church owns — she holds it in

Free and perpetual alms, unsubject to One earthly sceptre.

Leicester. Nay, but hear thy judgment.³⁹⁰

The King and all his barons —

Becket. Judgment! Barons! Who but the bridegroom dares to judge the bride,

Or he the bridegroom may appoint? Not he

That is not of the house, but from the street

Stain'd with the mire thereof.

I had been so true

To Henry and mine office that the King

Would throne me in the great archbishopric;

And I, that knew mine own infirmity,

For the King's pleasure rather than God's cause

Took it upon me — err'd thro' love of him.⁴⁰⁰

Now therefore God from me withdraws Himself,

And the King too.

What! forty thousand marks! Why, thou, the King, the Pope, the Saints, the world,

Know that when made archbishop I was freed,

Before the Prince and chief justiciary,

From every bond and debt and obligation

Incurr'd as Chancellor.

Hear me, son. As gold Outvalues dross, light darkness, Abel

Cain, The soul the body, and the Church the Throne,

I charge thee, upon pain of mine anathema,⁴¹⁰

That thou obey, not me, but God in me,

Rather than Henry. I refuse to stand By the King's censure, make my cry

to the Pope, By whom I will be judged; refer myself,

The King, these customs, all the Church, to him,

And under his authority — I depart.

[*Going.* Leicester looks at him doubtingly.

Am I a prisoner?

Leicester. By Saint Lazarus, no! I am confounded by thee. Go, in peace.

De Broc. In peace now — but after. Take that for earnest.

[*Flings a bone at him from the rushes.*

De Brito, Fitzurse, De Tracy, and others (flinging wisps of rushes). Ay,

go in peace, catiff, catiff! And that too, perjured prelate — and that, turn-

coat shaveling! There, there, there!

traitor, traitor, traitor!

Becket. Mannerless wolves !
[Turning and facing them.
Herbert. Enough, my lord, enough !
Becket. Barons of England and of
 Normandy,
 When what ye shake at doth but seem
 to fly,
 True test of coward, ye follow with a
 yell.
 But I that threw the mightiest knight
 of France,
 Sir Engelram de Trie, —
Herbert. Enough, my lord.
Becket. More than enough. I play
 the fool again.
Enter HERALD.
Herald. The King commands you,
 upon pain of death,
 That none should wrong or injure
 your archbishop.
Abbot. Deal gently with the young
 man Absalom.
*[Great doors of the Hall at the back
 open, and discover a crowd.*
They shout :
 Blessed is he that cometh in the name
 of the Lord !

SCENE IV

REFECTORY OF THE MONASTERY AT
 NORTHAMPTON

A Banquet on the Tables.

Enter BECKET. BECKET'S RETAIN-
 ERS.

First Retainer. Do thou speak first.
Second Retainer. Nay, thou ! Nay,
 thou ! Hast not thou drawn the short
 straw ?

First Retainer. My lord archbishop,
 wilt thou permit us —

Becket. To speak without stammer-
 ing and like a free man ? Ay.

First Retainer. My lord, permit us
 then to leave thy service. 10

Becket. When ?

First Retainer. Now.

Becket. To-night ?

First Retainer. To-night, my lord.

Becket. And why ?

First Retainer. My lord, we leave
 thee not without tears.

Becket. Tears ? Why not stay with
 me then ? 19

First Retainer. My lord, we cannot
 yield thee an answer altogether to thy
 satisfaction.

Becket. I warrant you, or your own
 either. Shall I find you one ? The
 King hath frowned upon me.

First Retainer. That is not alto-
 gether our answer, my lord.

Becket. No; yet all but all. Go, go !
 Ye have eaten of my dish and drunken
 of my cup for a dozen years. 30

First Retainer. And so we have
 We mean thee no wrong. Wilt thou
 not say, 'God bless you,' ere we go ?

Becket. God bless you all ! God
 redder your pale blood ! But mine
 is human-red ; and when ye shall
 hear it is poured out upon earth, and
 see it mounting to heaven, my 'God
 bless you,' that seems sweet to you
 now, will blast and blind you like a
 curse. 41

First Retainer. We hope not, my
 lord. Our humblest thanks for your
 blessing. Farewell !

[Exeunt Retainers.

Becket. Farewell, friends ! fare-
 well, swallows ! I wrong the bird ;
 she leaves only the nest she built,
 they leave the builder. Why ? Am
 I to be murdered to-night ?

[Knocking at the door.

Attendant. Here is a missive left
 at the gate by one from the castle. 51

Becket. Cornwall's hand or Leices-
 ter's ; they write marvellously alike.

[Reading.

'Fly at once to France, to King
 Louis of France ; there be those about
 our King who would have thy blood.'

Was not my lord of Leicester bidden
 to our supper ?

Attendant. Ay, my lord, and di-
 vers other earls and barons. But the
 hour is past, and our brother, Mas-
 ter Cook, he makes moan that all be
 a-getting cold. 63

Becket. And I make my moan along
 with him. Cold after warm, winter
 after summer, and the golden leaves,
 these earls and barons, that clung to
 me, frosted off me by the first cold
 frown of the King. Cold, but look

how the table steams, like a heathen altar; nay, like the altar at Jerusalem. Shall God's good gifts be wasted? None of them here! Call in the poor from the streets, and let them feast.

Herbert. That is the parable of our blessed Lord.

Becket. And why should not the parable of our blessed Lord be acted again? Call in the poor! The Church is ever at variance with the kings, and ever at one with the poor. I marked a group of lazars in the marketplace—half-rag, half-sore—beggars, poor rogues (Heaven bless 'em!) who never saw nor dreamed of such a banquet. I will amaze them. Call them in, I say. They shall henceforward be my carls and barons—our lords and masters in Christ Jesus. ⁸⁹

[*Exit Herbert.*]

If the King hold his purpose, I am myself a beggar. Forty thousand marks! forty thousand devils—and these craven bishops!

A Poor Man (entering) with his dog. My lord archbishop, may I come in 'with my poor friend, my dog? The King's verdurer caught him a-hunting in the forest, and cut off his paws. The dog followed his calling, my lord. I ha' carried him ever so many miles in my arms, and he licks my face and moans and cries out against the King. ¹⁰³

Becket. Better thy dog than thee. The King's courts would use thee worse than thy dog—they are too bloody. Were the Church king, it would be otherwise. Poor beast! poor beast! set him down. I will bind up his wounds with my napkin. Give him a bone, give him a bone! Who misuses a dog would misuse a child—they cannot speak for themselves. Past help! his paws are past help. God help him! ¹¹⁵

Enter the BEGGARS (and seat themselves at the Tables). BECKET and HERBERT wait upon them.

First Beggar. Swine, sheep, ox—here's a French supper! When thieves fall out, honest men—

Second Beggar. Is the archbishop a thief who gives thee thy supper? ¹²⁰

First Beggar. Well, then, how does it go? When honest men fall out, thieves—no, it can't be that.

Second Beggar. Who stole the widow's one sitting hen o' Sunday, when she was at mass?

First Beggar. Come, come! thou hadst thy share on her. Sitting hen! Our Lord Becket's our great sitting-hen cock, and we should n't ha' been sitting here if the barons and bishops had n't been a-sitting on the archbishop. ¹³³

Becket. Ay, the princes sat in judgment against me, and the Lord hath prepared your table—*Sederunt principes, ederunt pauperes.*

A Voice. Becket, beware of the knife!

Becket. Who spoke? ¹⁴⁰

Third Beggar. Nobody, my lord. What's that, my lord?

Becket. Venison.

Third Beggar. Venison?

Becket. Buck—deer, as you call it.

Third Beggar. King's meat! By the Lord, won't we pray for your lordship!

Becket. And, my children, your prayers will do more for me in the day of peril that dawns darkly and drearily over the house of God—yea, and in the day of judgment also, than the swords of the craven sycophants would have done had they remained true to me whose bread they have partaken. I must leave you to your banquet. Feed, feast, and be merry. Herbert, for the sake of the Church itself, if not for my own, I must fly to France to-night. Come with me.

[*Exit with Herbert.*]

Third Beggar. Here—all of you—my lord's health! (*they drink*). Well—if that is n't goodly wine— ¹⁶⁴

First Beggar. Then there is n't a goodly wench to serve him with it; they were fighting for her to-day in the street.

Third Beggar. Peace!

FIRST BEGGAR.

The black sheep baaed to the miller's ewe-lamb, ¹⁷⁰

'The miller's away for to-night.'

'Black sheep,' quoth she, 'too black a sin for me.'

And what said the black sheep, my masters?

'We can make a black sin white.'

Third Beggar. Peace!

FIRST BEGGAR.

'Ewe-lamb, ewe-lamb, I am here by the dam.'

But the miller came home that night,
And so dusted his back with the meal in his sack,

That he made the black sheep white.

Third Beggar. Be we not of the family? be we not a-supping with the head of the family? be we not in my lord's own refractory? Out from among us; thou art our black sheep. 185

Enter the four KNIGHTS.

Fitzurse. Sheep, said he? And sheep without the shepherd, too. Where is my lord archbishop? Thou the lustiest and lousiest of this Cain's brotherhood, answer. 190

Third Beggar. With Cain's answer, my lord. Am I his keeper? Thou shouldst call him Cain, not me.

Fitzurse. So I do, for he would murder his brother the State.

Third Beggar (rising and advancing). No, my lord; but because the Lord hath set his mark upon him that no man should murder him.

Fitzurse. Where is he? where is he? 201

Third Beggar. With Cain belike, in the land of Nod, or in the land of France for aught I know.

Fitzurse. France! Ha! De Morville, Tracy, Brito—fled is he? Cross swords, all of you! swear to follow him! Remember the Queen!

[*The four Knights cross their swords.*]

De Brito. They mock us; he is here. 210

[*All the Beggars rise and advance upon them.*]

Fitzurse. Come, you filthy knaves, let us pass.

Third Beggar. Nay, my lord, let us pass. We be a-going home after our supper in all humbleness, my lord; for the archbishop loves humbleness, my lord, and though we be

fifty to four, we daren't fight you with our crutches, my lord. There now, if thou hast not laid hands upon me! and my fellows know that I am all one scale like a fish. I pray God I haven't given thee my leprosy, my lord. 224

[*Fitzurse shrinks from him, and another presses upon De Brito.*]

De Brito. Away, dog!

Fourth Beggar. And I was bit by a mad dog o' Friday, an' I be half dog already by this token, that tho' I can drink wine I cannot bide water, my lord; and I want to bite, I want to bite, and they do say the very breath catches. 232

De Brito. Insolent clown! Shall I smite him with the edge of the sword?

De Morville. No, nor with the flat of it either. Smite the shepherd, and the sheep are scattered. Smite the sheep, and the shepherd will excommunicate thee.

De Brito. Yet my fingers itch to beat him into nothing. 241

Fifth Beggar. So do mine, my lord. I was born with it, and sulphur won't bring it out o' me. But for all that the archbishop washed my feet o' Tuesday. He likes it, my lord.

Sixth Beggar. And see here, my lord, this rag fro' the gangrene i' my leg. It's humbling—it smells o' human natur'. Wilt thou smell it, my lord? for the archbishop likes the smell on it, my lord; for I be his lord and master i' Christ, my lord. 253

De Morville. Faugh! we shall all be poisoned. Let us go.

[*They draw back, Beggars following.*]

Seventh Beggar. My lord, I ha' three sisters a-dying at home o' the sweating sickness. They be dead while I be a-supping.

Eighth Beggar. And I ha' nine darters i' the spital that be dead ten times o'er i' one day w' the putrid fever; and I bring the taint on it along w' me, for the archbishop likes it, my lord. 265

[*Pressing upon the Knights till they disappear thro' the door.*]

Third Beggar. Crutches, and itches, and leprosies, and ulcers, and gan

grenes, and running sores, praise ye the Lord, for to-night ye have saved our archbishop!

First Beggar. I'll go back again. I hain't half done yet.

Herbert of Bosham (entering). My friends, the archbishop bids you good-night. He hath retired to rest, and being in great jeopardy of his life, he hath made his bed between the altars, from whence he sends me to bid you this night pray for him who hath fed you in the wilderness.

Third Beggar. So we will — so we will, I warrant thee. Becket shall be king, and the Holy Father shall be king, and the world shall live by the King's venison and the bread o' the Lord, and there shall be no more poor for ever. Hurrah! Vive le Roy! That's the English of it.

ACT II

SCENE I. — ROSAMUND'S BOWER

A Garden of Flowers. In the midst a bank of wild-flowers with a bench before it.

Voices heard singing among the trees.

DUET.

1. Is it the wind of the dawn that I hear in the pine overhead?
2. No; but the voice of the deep as it hollows the cliffs of the land.
1. Is there a voice coming up with the voice of the deep from the strand, One coming up with a song in the flush of the glimmering red?
2. Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.
1. Love that can shape or can shatter a life till the life shall have fled?
2. Nay, let us welcome him, Love that can lift up a life from the dead.
1. Keep him away from the lone little isle. Let us be, let us be.
2. Nay, let him make it his own, let him reign in it — he, it is he, Love that is born of the deep coming up with the sun from the sea.

Enter HENRY and ROSAMUND.

Rosamund. Be friends with him again — I do beseech thee.

Henry. With Becket? I have but one hour with thee —

Sceptre and crozier clashing, and the mitre

Grappling the crown — and when I flee from this

For a gasp of freer air, a breathing-while

To rest upon thy bosom and forget him —

Why thou, my bird, thou pipest 'Becket, Becket' —

Yea, thou my golden dream of Love's own bower,

Must be the nightmare breaking on my peace

With 'Becket.'

Rosamund. O my life's life, not to smile

Is all but death to me. My sun, no cloud!

Let there not be one frown in this one hour.

Out of the many thine, let this be mine!

Look rather thou all-royal as when first

I met thee.

Henry. Where was that?

Rosamund. Forgetting that Forgets me too.

Henry. Nay, I remember it well. There on the moors.

Rosamund. And in a narrow path. A plover flew before thee. Then I

saw Thy high black steed among the flaming furze,

Like sudden light in the main glare of day.

And from that height something was said to me,

I knew not what.

Henry. I ask'd the way.

Rosamund. I think so. So I lost mine.

Henry. Thou wast too shamed to answer.

Rosamund. Too scared — so young!

Henry. The rosebud of my rose! — Well, well, no more of him — I have sent his folk,

His kin, all his belongings, overseas;

Age, orphans, and babe-breasting mothers — all

By hundreds to him—there to beg,
starve, die—
So that the fool King Louis feed
them not.

The man shall feel that I can strike
him yet.

Rosamund. Babes, orphans, mothers! is that royal, sire?

Henry. And I have been as royal
with the Church.

He shelter'd in the Abbey of Pontigny,
There wore his time studying the
canon law

To work it against me. But since he
cursed

My friends at Veselay, I have let
them know

That if they keep him longer as their
guest,

I scatter all their cowls to all the hells.

Rosamund. And is that altogether
royal?

Henry. Traitor!

Rosamund. A faithful traitress to
thy royal fame.

Henry. Fame! what care I for
fame? Spite, ignorance, envy,

Yea, honesty too, paint her what way
they will,

Fame of to-day is infamy to-morrow;
Infamy of to-day is fame to-mor-
row;

And round and round again. What
matters? Royal—

I mean to leave the royalty of my
crown

Unlessen'd to mine heirs.

Rosamund. Still—thy fame too;
I say that should be royal.

Henry. And I say,
I care not for thy saying.

Rosamund. And I say,
I care not for thy saying. A greater
King

Than thou art, Love, who cares not
for the word,

Makes 'care not'—care. There have
I spoken true?

Henry. Care dwell with me for
ever when I cease

To care for thee as ever!

Rosamund. No need! no need! . . .
There is a bench. Come, wilt thou
sit?—My bank

Of wild-flowers [*he sits*]. At thy feet!

[*She sits at his feet.*]

Henry. I bade them clear
A royal pleasance for thee, in the
wood,

Not leave these country-folk at court.

Rosamund. I brought them
In from the wood, and set them here.

I love them
More than the garden flowers, that
seem at most

Sweet guests, or foreign cousins, not
half speaking

The language of the land. I love
them too,

Yes. But, my liege, I am sure, of all
the roses—

Shame fall on those who gave it a
dog's name!

This wild one (*picking a briar-rose*)—
nay, I shall not prick myself—

Is sweetest. Do but smell!

Henry. Thou rose of the world!
Thou rose of all the roses! [*Muttering.*]

I am not worthy of her—this beast-
body

That God has plunged my soul in—
I, that taking

The Fiend's advantage of a throne, so
long

Have wander'd among women,—a
foul stream

Thro' fever-breeding levels,—at her
side,

Among these happy dales, run clearer,
drop

The mud I carried, like yon brook,
and glass

The faithful face of heaven—
[*Looking at her, and unconsciously*

aloud, —thine! thine!

Rosamund. I know it.

Henry (*muttering*). Not hers. We
have but one bond, her hate of

Becket.

Rosamund (*half hearing*). Nay! nay!
what art thou muttering? I

hate Becket?

Henry (*muttering*). A sane and nat-
ural loathing for a soul

Purer, and truer and nobler than her-
self;

And mine a bitterer illegitimate hate,
A bastard hate born of a former

love.

Rosamund. My fault to name him!
O, let the hand of one

To whom thy voice is all her music
stay it

But for a breath!

[*Puts her hand before his lips.*

Speak only of thy love.

Why, there—like some loud beggar
at thy gate

The happy boldness of this hand hath
won it—

Love's alms, thy kiss (*looking at her
hand*)—Sacred! I'll kiss it too.

[*Kissing it.*

There! wherefore dost thou so peruse
it? Nay,

There may be crosses in my line of
life.

Henry. Not half *her* hand—no hand
to mate with *her*, 100

If it should come to that.

Rosamund. With her? with whom?

Henry. Life on the hand is naked
gipsy-stuff;

Life on the face, the brows—clear
innocence!

Vein'd marble—not a furrow yet—
and hers [*Muttering.*

Crost and recrost, a venomous spider's
web—

Rosamund (*springing up*). Out of
the cloud, my Sun—out of the
eclipse

Narrowing my golden hour!

Henry. O Rosamund,
I would be true—would tell thee all
—and something

I had to say—I love thee none the
less— 109

Which will so vex thee.

Rosamund. Something against *me*?

Henry. No, no, against myself.

Rosamund. I will not hear it.
Come, come, mine hour! I bargain
for mine hour.

I'll call thee little Geoffrey.

Henry. Call him!

Rosamund. Geoffrey!

Enter GEOFFREY.

Henry. How the boy grows!

Rosamund. Ay, and his brows are
thine;

The mouth is only Clifford, my dear
father.

Geoffrey. My liege, what hast thou
brought me?

Henry. Venal imp!

What say'st thou to the Chancellor-
ship of England?

Geoffrey. O, yes, my liege.

Henry. 'O, yes, my liege!' He
speaks

As if it were a cake of gingerbread.

Dost thou know, my boy, what it is
to be Chancellor of England? 121

Geoffrey. Something good, or thou
wouldst not give it me.

Henry. It is, my boy, to side with
the King when Chancellor, and then to
be made archbishop and go against
the King who made him, and turn the
world upside down.

Geoffrey. I won't have it then. Nay,
but give it me, and I promise thee not
to turn the world upside down. 131

Henry (*giving him a ball*). Here is
a ball, my boy, thy world, to turn any
way and play with as thou wilt—
which is more than I can do with
mine. Go try it, play.

[*Exit Geoffrey.*

A pretty lusty boy.

Rosamund. So like to thee;
Like to be liker.

Henry. Not in my chin, I hope!
That threatens double.

Rosamund. Thou art manlike per-
fect.

Henry. Ay, ay, no doubt; and
were I humpt behind, 140

Thou'dst say as much—the goodly
way of women

Who love, for which I love them.

May God grant

No ill befall or him or thee when I

Am gone!

Rosamund. Is he thy enemy?

Henry. He? who? ay!

Rosamund. Thine enemy knows
the secret of my bower.

Henry. And I could tear him asun-
der with wild horses

Before he would betray it. Nay—no
fear!

More like is he to excommunicate me.

Rosamund. And I would creep,
crawl over knife-edge flint

Barefoot, a hundred leagues, to stay
his hand 150

Before he flash'd the bolt.

Henry. And when he flash'd it
Shrink from me, like a daughter of
the Church.

Rosamund. Ay, but he will not.
Henry. Ay! but if he did?
Rosamund. O, then! O, then! I almost fear to say
 That my poor heretic heart would ex-communicate
 His excommunication, clinging to thee
 Closer than ever.

Henry (raising Rosamund and kissing her). My brave-hearted
 Rose!

Hath he ever been to see thee?

Rosamund. Here? not he.
 And it is so lonely here — no confessor.

Henry. Thou shalt confess all thy
 sweet sins to me. ¹⁶⁰

Rosamund. Besides, we came away
 in such a heat,
 I brought not even my crucifix.

Henry. Take this.
 [Giving her the Crucifix which
 Eleanor gave him.]

Rosamund. O, beautiful! May I
 have it as mine, till mine
 Be mine again?

Henry (throwing it round her neck).
 Thine — as I am — till death!

Rosamund. Death? no! I'll have
 it with me in my shroud,
 And wake with it, and show it to all
 the Saints.

Henry. Nay — I must go; but
 when thou layest thy lip
 To this, remembering One who died
 for thee,

Remember also one who lives for
 thee

Out there in France; for I must hence
 to brave ¹⁷⁰

The Pope, King Louis, and this tur-
 bulent priest.

Rosamund (kneeling). O, by thy
 love for me, all mine for thee,
 Fling not thy soul into the flames of
 hell!

I kneel to thee — be friends with him
 again.

Henry. Look, look! if little Geof-
 frey have not tost
 His ball into the brook! makes after
 it too

To find it. Why, the child will drown
 himself.

Rosamund. Geoffrey! Geoffrey!
 [Exeunt.]

SCENE II

MONTMIRAIL

'The Meeting of the Kings.' JOHN OF
 OXFORD and HENRY. Crowd in the
 distance.

John of Oxford. You have not
 crown'd young Henry yet, my
 liege?

Henry. Crown'd! by God's eyes, we
 will not have him crown'd.
 I spoke of late to the boy, he answer'd
 me,

As if he wore the crown already — No,
 We will not have him crown'd.

'Tis true what Becket told me, that
 the mother

Would make him play his kingship
 against mine.

John of Oxford. Not have him
 crown'd?

Henry. Not now — not yet! and
 Becket —

Becket should crown him were he
 crown'd at all;

But, since we would be lord of our
 own manor, ¹⁸⁰

This Canterbury, like a wounded
 deer,

Has fled our presence and our feeding-
 grounds.

John of Oxford. Cannot a smooth
 tongue lick him whole again

To serve your will?

Henry. He hates my will, not me.

John of Oxford. There's York, my
 liege.

Henry. But England scarce would
 hold

Young Henry king, if only crown'd
 by York,

And that would stilt up York to twice
 himself.

There is a movement yonder in the
 crowd —

See if our pious — what shall I call
 him, John? —

Husband-in-law, or smooth-shorn su-
 zerain, ²⁰

Be yet within the field.

John of Oxford. I will. [Exit.]

Henry. Ay! Ay!
 Mince and go back! his politic Holi-
 ness

Hath all but climb'd the Roman perch
again,

And we shall hear him presently with
clapt wing

Crow over Barbarossa—at last tongue-
free

To blast my realms with excommuni-
cation

And interdict. I must patch up a
peace—

A peace in this long-tugged-at, thread-
bare-worn

Quarrel of Crown and Church—to
rend again.

His Holiness cannot steer straight
thro' shoals, ³⁰

Nor I. The citizen's heir hath con-
quer'd me

For the moment. So we make our
peace with him.

Enter LOUIS.

Brother of France, what shall be done
with Becket?

Louis. The Holy Thomas! Brother,
you have traffick'd
Between the Emperor and the Pope,
between

The Pope and Antipope—a perilous
game

For men to play with God.

Henry. Ay, ay, good brother,
They call you the Monk-King.

Louis. Who calls me? she
That was my wife, now yours? You
have her Duchy,

The point you aim'd at, and pray God
she prove ⁴⁰

True wife to you. You have had the
better of us

In secular matters.

Henry. Come, confess, good brother,

You did your best or worst to keep
her Duchy.

Only the golden Leopard printed in
it

Such hold-fast claws that you per-
force again

Shrank into France. Tut, tut! did
we convene

This conference but to babble of our
wives?

They are plagues enough in-door.

Louis. We fought in the East,
And felt the sun of Antioch scald our
mail,

And push'd our lances into Saracen
hearts. ⁵⁰

We never hounded on the State at
home

To spoil the Church.

Henry. How should you see this
rightly?

Louis. Well, well, no more! I
am proud of my 'Monk-King,'

Whoever named me; and, brother,
Holy Church

May rock, but will not wreck, nor our
archbishop

Stagger on the slope decks for any
rough sea

Blown by the breath of kings. We
do forgive you

For aught you wrought against us.

[*Henry holds up his hand.*

Nay, I pray you,
Do not defend yourself. You will do
much ⁵⁹

To rake out all old dying heats if you,
At my requesting, will but look into

The wrongs you did him, and restore
his kin,

Reseat him on his throne of Canter-
bury,

Be, both, the friends you were.

Henry. The friends we were!
Co-mates we were, and had our sport
together.

Co-kings we were, and made the laws
together.

The world had never seen the like
before.

You are too cold to know the fashion
of it.

Well, well, we will be gentle with him,
gracious—

Most gracious.

*Enter BECKET, after him, JOHN OF
OXFORD, ROGER OF YORK, GIL-
BERT FOLIOT, DE BROU, FITZURSE,
etc.*

Only that the rift he made
May close between us, here I am
wholly king, ⁷¹

The word should come from him.

Becket (kneeling). Then, my dear
liege,

I here deliver all this controversy
into your royal hands.

Henry. Ah, Thomas, Thomas,
Thou art thyself again, Thomas again.

Becket (rising). Saving God's honor

Henry. Out upon thee, man!
Saving the devil's honor, his yes and
no.

Knights, bishops, earls, this London
spawn — by Mahound,
I had sooner have been born a Mussul-
man —

Less clashing with their priests — ⁸⁰
I am half-way down the slope — will
no man stay me?

I dash myself to pieces — I stay my-
self —

Puff — it is gone. You, Master
Becket, you

That owe to me your power over me —
Nay, nay —

Brother of France, you have taken,
cherish'd him

Who thief-like fled from his own
church by night,

No man pursuing. I would have had
him back.

Take heed he do not turn and rend
you too:

For whatsoever may displease him —
that ⁹⁰

Is clean against God's honor — a shift,
a trick

Whereby to challenge, face me out of
all

My regal rights. Yet, yet — that none
may dream

I go against God's honor — ay, or him-
self

In any reason, choose

A hundred of the wisest heads from
England,

A hundred, too, from Normandy and
Anjou;

Let these decide on what was custom-
ary

In olden days, and all the Church of
France

Decide on their decision, I am con-
tent. ¹⁰⁰

More, what the mightiest and the ho-
liest

Of all his predecessors may have done
Even to the least and meanest of my
own,

Let him do the same to me — I am
content.

Louis. Ay, ay! the King humbles
himself enough.

Becket (aside). Words! he will wrig-
gle out of them like an eel

When the time serves. (*Aloud.*) My
lieges and my lords,

The thanks of Holy Church are due to
those

That went before us for their work,
which we

Inheriting reap an easier harvest.
Yet — ¹¹⁰

Louis. My lord, will you be greater
than the Saints,

More than Saint Peter? whom — what
is it you doubt?

Behold your peace at hand.

Becket. I say that those
Who went before us did not wholly
clear

The deadly growths of earth, which
hell's own heat

So dwelt on that they rose and dark-
en'd heaven.

Yet they did much. Would God they
had torn up all

By the hard root, which shoots again;
our trial

Had so been less; but, seeing they
were men

Defective or excessive, must we fol-
low ¹²⁰

All that they overdid or underdid?
Nay, if they were defective as Saint
Peter

Denying Christ, who yet defied the
tyrant,

We hold by his defiance, not his de-
fect.

O good son Louis, do not counsel me,
No, to suppress God's honor for the
sake

Of any king that breathes. No, God
forbid!

Henry. No! God forbid! and turn
me Mussulman!

No God but one, and Mahound is his
prophet.

But for your Christian, look you, you
shall have ¹³⁰

None other God but me — me, Thomas,
son

Of Gilbert Becket, London merchant.
Out!

I hear no more. [*Exit.*]

Louis. Our brother's anger puts him,
Poor man, beside himself — not wise.
My lord,

We have clasp'd your cause, believing
that our brother

Had wrong'd you; but this day he
proffer'd peace.

You will have war; and tho' we grant
the Church

King over this world's kings, yet, my
good lord,

We that are kings are something in
this world,

And so we pray you, draw yourself
from under

The wings of France. We shelter you
no more. 140 *[Exit.*

John of Oxford. I am glad that
France hath scouted him at last.

I told the Pope what manner of man
he was. *[Exit.*

Roger of York. Yea, since he flouts
the will of either realm,

Let either cast him away like a dead
dog! *[Exit.*

Foliot. Yea, let a stranger spoil his
heritage,

And let another take his bishopric!
[Exit.

De Broc. Our castle, my lord, be-
longs to Canterbury.

I pray you come and take it. *[Exit.*
Fitzurse. When you will.

Becket. Cursed be John of Oxford,
Roger of York, 150

And Gilbert Foliot! cursed those De
Brocs

That hold our Saltwood Castle from
our see!

Cursed Fitzurse, and all therest of them
That sow this hate between my lord

and me!

Voices from the Crowd. Blessed be
the lord archbishop, who hath with-

stood two kings to their faces for the
honor of God.

Becket. Out of the mouths of babes
and sucklings, praise!

I thank you, sons; when kings but
hold by crowns, 160

The crowd that hungers for a crown
in heaven

Is my true king.

Herbert. Thy true King bade thee be
A fisher of men; thou hast them in
thy net.

Becket. I am too like the King here;
both of us

Too headlong for our office. Better
have been

A fisherman at Bosham, my good Her-
bert,

Thy birthplace — the sea-creek — the
petty rill

That falls into it — the green field —
the gray church —

The simple lobster-basket, and the
mesh —

The more or less of daily labor done —
The pretty gaping bills in the home-
nest 171

Piping for bread — the daily want
supplied —

The daily pleasure to supply it.
Herbert. Ah, Thomas,

You had not borne it, no, not for a
day.

Becket. Well, maybe, no.

Herbert. But bear with Walter Map,
For here he comes to comment on the
time.

Enter WALTER MAP.

Walter Map. Pity, my lord, that you
have quenched the warmth of France

toward you, tho' His Holiness, after
much smouldering and smoking, be

kindled again upon your quarter. 181

Becket. Ay, if he do not end in smoke
again.

Walter Map. My lord, the fire, when
first kindled, said to the smoke, 'Go

up, my son, straight to heaven.' And
the smoke said, 'I go;' but anon the

Northeast took and turned him South-
west, then the Southwest turned him

Northeast, and so of the other winds;
but it was in him to go up straight if

the time had been quieter. Your lord-
ship affects the unwavering perpen-

dicular; but His Holiness, pushed one
way by the Empire and another by

England, if he move at all — Heaven
stay him! — is fain to diagonalize.

Herbert. Diagonalize! thou art a
wordmonger.

Our Thomas never will diagonalize.
Thou art a jester and a verse-maker.

Diagonalize! 200

Walter Map. Is the world any the
worse for my verses if the Latin

rhymes be rolled out from a full
mouth? or any harm done to the peo-
ple if my jest be in defense of the

Truth?
Becket. Ay, if the jest be so done
that the people

Delight to wallow in the grossness of it,

Till Truth herself be shamed of her defender.

Non defensoribus istis, Walter Map! ²⁰⁹

Walter Map. Is that my case? so if the city be sick, and I cannot call the kennel sweet, your lordship would suspend me from verse writing, as you suspended yourself after sub-writing to the customs.

Becket. I pray God pardon mine infirmity! ²¹⁷

Walter Map. Nay, my lord, take heart; for tho' you suspended yourself, the Pope let you down again; and tho' you suspend Foliot or another, the Pope will not leave them in suspense, for the Pope himself is always in suspense, like Mahound's coffin hung between heaven and earth — always in suspense, like the scales, till the weight of Germany or the gold of England brings one of them down to the dust — always in suspense, like the tail of the horologe — to and fro — tick-tack — we make the time, we keep the time, ay, and we serve the time; for I have heard say that if you boxed the Pope's ears with a purse, you might stagger him, but he would pocket the purse. No saying of mine — Jocelyn of Salisbury. But the King hath bought half the College of Red-hats. He warmed to you to-day, and you have chilled him again. Yet you both love God. Agree with him quickly again, even for the sake of the Church. My one grain of good counsel which you will not swallow. I hate a split between old friendships as I hate the dirty gap in the face of a Cistercian monk, that will swallow anything. Farewell. [*Exit.*]

Becket. Map scoffs at Rome. I all but hold with Map.

Save for myself no Rome were left in England, ²⁵⁰

All had been his. Why should this Rome, this Rome,

Still choose Barabbas rather than the Christ,

Absolve the left-hand thief and damn the right?

Take fees of tyranny, wink at sacrilege,

Which even Peter had not dared? condemn

The blameless exile? —

Herbert. Thee, thou holy Thomas! I would that thou hadst been the Holy Father.

Becket. I would have done my most to keep Rome holy, I would have made Rome know she still is Rome —

Who stands aghast at her eternal self And shakes at mortal kings — her vacillation, ²⁶¹

Avarice, craft — O God, how many an innocent

Has left his bones upon the way to Rome

Unwept, uncared for! Yea — on mine own self

The King had had no power except for Rome.

'Tis not the King who is guilty of mine exile,

But Rome, Rome, Rome!

Herbert. My lord, I see this Louis Returning, ah! to drive thee from his realm.

Becket. He said as much before. Thou art no prophet,

Nor yet a prophet's son.

Herbert. Whatever he say, Deny not thou God's honor for a king. ²⁷¹

The King looks troubled.

Re-enter KING LOUIS.

Louis. My dear lord archbishop, I learn but now that those poor Poitevins

That in thy cause were stirr'd against King Henry

Have been, despite his kingly promise given

To our own self of pardon, evilly used

And put to pain. I have lost all trust in him.

The Church alone hath eyes — and now I see

That I was blind — suffer the phrase — surrendering

God's honor to the pleasure of a man. ²⁸⁰

Forgive me and absolve me, holy father. [*Kneels.*]

Becket. Son, I absolve thee in the name of God.

Louis (rising). Return to Sens,
where we will care for you.
The wine and wealth of all our France
are yours;
Rest in our realm, and be at peace
with all. [*Exeunt.*]

Voices from the Crowd. Long live
the good King Louis! God bless the
great archbishop!

Re-enter HENRY and JOHN OF OXFORD.

Henry (looking after King Louis and Becket). Ay, there they go—
both backs are turn'd to me—
Why, then I strike into my former
path

For England, crown young Henry²⁹⁰
there, and make
Our waning Eleanor all but love me!

John,
Thou hast served me heretofore with
Rome—and well.

They call thee John the Swearer.

John of Oxford. For this reason,
That, being ever duteous to the King,
I evermore have sworn upon his
side,

And ever mean to do it.

Henry (claps him on the shoulder).
Honest John!
To Rome again! the storm begins
again.

Spare not thy tongue! be lavish with
our coins,

Threaten our junction with the Em-
peror—flatter

And fright the Pope—bribe all the³⁰⁰
cardinals—leave

Lateran and Vatican in one dust of
gold—

Swear and unswear, state and misstate
thy best!

I go to have young Henry crown'd by
York.

ACT III

SCENE I.—THE BOWER

HENRY and ROSAMUND.

Henry. All that you say is just.
I cannot answer it
Till better times, when I shall put
away—

Rosamund. What will you put away?

Henry. That which you ask me
Till better times. Let it content you
now

There is no woman that I love so
well.

Rosamund. No woman but should
be content with that—

Henry. And one fair child to
fondle!

Rosamund. O, yes, the child
We waited for so long—Heaven's gift
at last—

And how you doted on him then!
To-day

I almost fear'd your kiss was colder—
yes—

But then the child *is* such a child!
What chance

That he should ever spread into the
man

Here in our silence? I have done
my best.

I am not learn'd.

Henry. I am the King, his father,
And I will look to it. Is our secret
ours?

Have you had any alarm? no
stranger?

Rosamund. No.
The warder of the bower hath given
himself

Of late to wine. I sometimes think he
sleeps

When he should watch; and yet what
fear? the people

Believe the wood enchanted. No one
comes,

Nor foe nor friend; his fond excess
of wine

Springs from the loneliness of my poor
bower,

Which weighs even on me.

Henry. Yet these tree-towers,
Their long bird-echoing minster-
aisles,—the voice

Of the perpetual brook, these golden
slopes

Of Solomon-shaming flowers—that
was your saying,

All pleased you so at first.

Rosamund. Not now so much.
My Anjou bower was scarce as beau-
tiful.

But you were oftener there. I have
none but you.

The brook's voice is not yours, and no
flower, not

The sun himself, should he be changed³⁰
to one,

Could shine away the darkness of that
gap

Left by the lack of love.

Henry. The lack of love!

Rosamund. Of one we love. Nay,

I would not be bold,

Yet hoped ere this you might—

[*Looks earnestly at him.*]

Henry. Anything further?

Rosamund. Only my best bower-
maiden died of late,

And that old priest whom John of
Salisbury trusted

Hath sent another.

Henry. Secret?

Rosamund. I but ask'd her

One question, and she primm'd her
mouth and put

Her hands together—thus—and said,
God help her,

That she was sworn to silence.

Henry. What did you ask her?

Rosamund. Some daily something-
nothing.

Henry. Secret, then?

Rosamund. I do not love her. Must
you go, my liege,

So suddenly?

Henry. I came to England sud-
denly,

And on a great occasion sure to wake
As great a wrath in Becket—

Rosamund. Always Becket!

He always comes between us.

Henry. And to meet it
I needs must leave as suddenly. It is
raining.

Put on your hood and see me to the
bounds.

[*Exeunt.*]

MARGERY (*singing behind scene*).

Babble in bower

Under the rose!

Bee must n't buzz,

Whoop—but he knows.

Kiss me, little one,

Nobody near!

Grasshopper, grasshopper,

Whoop—you can hear.

Kiss in the bower,

Tit on the tree!

Bird must n't tell,

Whoop—he can see.

Enter MARGERY.

I ha' been but a week here and I ha'
seen what I ha' seen, for to be sure it's
no more than a week since our old
Father Phillip that has confessed our
mother for twenty years, and she was
hard pat to it, and to speak truth,
nigh at the end of our last crust, and
that mouldy, and she cried out on him
to put me forth in the world and to
make me a woman of the world, and
to win my own bread, whereupon he
asked our mother if I could keep a
quiet tongue i' my head, and not
speak till I was spoke to, and I an-
swered for myself that I never spoke
more than was needed, and he told me
he would advance me to the service of
a great lady, and took me ever so far
away, and gave me a great pat o' the
cheek for a pretty wench, and said it
was a pity to blindfold such eyes as
mine, and such to be sure they be, but
he blinded 'em for all that, and so
brought me no-hows as I may say, and
the more shame to him after his pro-
mise, into a garden and not into the
world, and bade me whatever I saw
not to speak one word, an' it 'ud be
well for me in the end, for there were
great ones who would look after me,
and to be sure I ha' seen great ones
to-day—and then not to speak one
word, for that's the rule o' the garden,
tho' to be sure if I had been Eve i'
the garden I should n't ha' minded the
apple, for what's an apple, you know
save to a child, and I'm no child, but
more a woman o' the world than my
lady here, and I ha' seen what I ha'
seen—tho' to be sure if I had n't
minded it we should all on us ha' had
to go, bless the Saints, wi' bare backs,
but the backs 'ud ha' countenanced
one another, and belike it 'ud ha' been
always summer, and anyhow I am as
well-shaped as my lady here, and I
ha' seen what I ha' seen, and what's
the good of my talking to myself, for
here comes my lady (*enter Rosamund*),
and, my lady, tho' I should n't speak
one word, I wish you joy o' the King's
brother.

Rosamund. What is it you mean?

Margery. I mean your Goodman,
your husband, my lady, for I saw

your ladyship a-parting wi' him even now i' the coppice, when I was a-getting o' bluebells for your ladyship's nose to smell on — and I ha' seen the King once at Oxford, and he's as like the King as fingernail to fingernail, and I thought at first it was the King, only you know the King's married, for King Louis — 125

Rosamund. Married!

Margery. Years and years, my lady, for her husband, King Louis —

Rosamund. Hush!

Margery. And I thought if it were the King's brother he had a better bride than the King, for the people do say that his is bad beyond all reckoning, and —

Rosamund. The people lie. 135

Margery. Very like, my lady, but most on 'em know an honest woman and a lady when they see her, and besides they say she makes songs, and that's against her, for I never knew an honest woman that could make songs, tho' to be sure our mother 'll sing me old songs by the hour, but then, God help her, she had 'em from her mother, and her mother from her mother back and back for ever so long, but none on 'em ever made songs, and they were all honest.

Rosamund. Go, you shall tell me of her some other time. 151

Margery. There's none so much to tell on her, my lady, only she kept the seventh commandment better than some I know on, or I could n't look your ladyship i' the face, and she brew'd the best ale in all Glo'ster, that is to say in her time when she had the 'Crown.'

Rosamund. The crown! who? 160

Margery. Mother.

Rosamund. I mean her whom you call — fancy — my husband's brother's wife.

Margery. O, Queen Eleanor. Yes, my lady; and tho' I be sworn not to speak a word, I can tell you all about her, if —

Rosamund. No word now. I am faint and sleepy. Leave me. Nay — go. What! will you anger me?

[Exit Margery.]

He charged me not to question any of those 172

About me. Have I? no! she question'd me.

Did she not slander him? Should she stay here?

May she not tempt me, being at my side,

To question her? Nay, can I send her hence

Without his kingly leave? I am in the dark.

I have lived, poor bird, from cage to cage, and known

Nothing but him — happy to know no more,

So that he loved me — and he loves me — yes, 180

And bound me by his love to secrecy Till his own time.

Eleanor, Eleanor, have I Not heard ill things of her in France? O, she's

The Queen of France. I see it — some confusion,

Some strange mistake. I did not hear aright,

Myself confused with parting from the King.

MARGERY (behind scene).

Bee must n't buzz,
Whoop — but he knows.

Rosamund. Yet her — what her? he hinted of some her —

When he was here before — 190
Something that would displease me.

Hath he stray'd

From love's clear path into the common bush,

And, being scratch'd, 'returns to his true rose,

Who hath not thorn enough to prick him for it,

Even with a word?

MARGERY (behind scene).

Bird must n't tell,
Whoop — he can see.

Rosamund. I would not hear him
Nay — there's more — he frown'd

'No mate for her, if it should come to that' —

To that — to what?

MARGERY (*behind scene*).

Whoop — but he knows,
Whoop — but he knows.

Rosamund. O God! some dreadful
truth is breaking on me —
Some dreadful thing is coming on me.

Enter GEOFFREY.

Geoffrey! Geoffrey!
Geoffrey. What are you crying for,
when the sun shines?

Rosamund. Hath not thy father
left us to ourselves?

Geoffrey. Ay, but he's taken the
rain with him. I hear Margery: I'll
go play with her. [*Exit* Geoffrey.]

ROSAMUND.

Rainbow, stay, 210
Gleam upon gloom,
Bright as my dream,
Rainbow, stay!
But it passes away,
Gloom upon gleam,
Dark as my doom —
O rainbow, stay!

SCENE II

OUTSIDE THE WOODS NEAR ROSA-
MUND'S BOWER

ELEANOR. FITZURSE.

Eleanor. Up from the salt lips of
the land we two
Have track'd the King to this dark
inland wood;
And somewhere hereabouts he van-
ish'd. Here
His turtle builds; his exit is our adit.
Watch! he will out again, and pre-
sently,
Seeing he must to Westminster and
crown

Young Henry there to-morrow.

Fitzurse. We have watch'd
So long in vain, he hath pass'd out
again,
And on the other side.

[*A great horn winded.*
Hark! Madam!

Eleanor. Ay,
How ghostly sounds that horn in the
black wood! 10

[*A countryman flying.*

Whither away, man? what are you
flying from?

Countryman. The witch! the witch!
she sits naked by a great heap of gold
in the middle of the wood, and when
the horn sounds she comes out as a
wolf. Get you hence! a man passed
in there to-day. I holla'd to him, but
he didn't hear me; he'll never out
again, the witch has got him. I
daren't stay — I dare n't stay! 20

Eleanor. Kind of the witch to give
thee warning, tho'. [*Man flies.*
Is not this wood-witch of the rustic's
fear

Our woodland Circe that hath witch'd
the King?

[*Horn sounded. Another flying.*

Fitzurse. Again! stay, fool, and
tell me why thou fliest.

Countryman. Fly thou too. The
King keeps his forest head of game
here, and when that horn sounds a
score of wolf-dogs are let loose that
will tear thee piecemeal. Linger not
till the third horn. Fly! [*Exit.*

Eleanor. This is the likelier tale.

We have hit the place. 31

Now let the King's fine game look to
itself. [*Horn.*

Fitzurse. Again! —

And far on in the dark heart of the
wood
I hear the yelping of the hounds of
hell.

Eleanor. I have my dagger here to
still their throats.

Fitzurse. Nay, madam, not to-night
— the night is falling.

What can be done to-night?

Eleanor. Well — well — away.

SCENE III

TRAITOR'S MEADOW AT FRÉTEVAL.
PAVILIONS AND TENTS OF THE
ENGLISH AND FRENCH BARONAGE

BECKET and HERBERT OF BOSHAM.

Becket. See here!

Herbert. What's here?

Becket. A notice from the priest
To whom our John of Salisbury com-
mitted

The secret of the bower, that our
wolf-Queen
Is prowling round the fold. I should
be back

In England even for this.

Herbert. These are by-things
In the great cause.

Becket. 'The by-things of the Lord
Are the wrong'd innocences that will
cry

From all the hidden by-ways of the
world

In the great day against the wronger.

I know
Thy meaning. Perish she, I, all, be-
fore 10

The Church should suffer wrong!

Herbert. Do you see, my lord,
There is the King talking with Walter
Map?

Becket. He hath the Pope's last let-
ters, and they threaten
The immediate thunder-blast of inter-
dict;

Yet he can scarce be touching upon
those,

Or scarce would smile that fashion.

Herbert. Winter sunshine!
Beware of opening out thy bosom to
it,

Lest thou, myself, and all thy flock
should catch

An after ague-fit of trembling. Look!
He bows, he bares his head, he is
coming hither. 20

Still with a smile.

*Enter KING HENRY and WALTER
MAP.*

Henry. We have had so many hours
together, Thomas,
So many happy hours alone together,
That I would speak with you once
more alone.

Becket. My liege, your will and
happiness are mine.

[*Exeunt King and Becket.*

Herbert. The same smile still.

Walter Map. Do you see that great
black cloud that hath come over the
sun and cast us all into shadow?

Herbert. And feel it too. 30

Walter Map. And see you yon side-
beam that is forced from under it, and
sets the church-tower over there all
a-hell-fire as it were?

Herbert. Ay.

Walter Map. It is this black, bell-
silencing, anti-marrying, burial-hin-
dering interdict that hath squeezed
out this side-smile upon Canterbury,
whereof may come conflagration.
Were I Thomas, I would n't trust it.
Sudden change is a house on sand;
and tho' I count Henry honest enough,
yet when fear creeps in at the front,
honesty steals out at the back, and
the King at last is fairly scared by
this cloud—this interdict. I have
been more for the King than the
Church in this matter—yea, even for
the sake of the Church; for, truly, as
the case stood, you had safelier have
slain an archbishop than a she-goat.
But our recoverer and upholder of
customs hath in this crowning of
young Henry by York and London so
violated the immemorial usage of the
Church, that, like the grave-digger's
child I have heard of, trying to ring
the bell, he hath half-hanged himself
in the rope of the Church, or rather
pulled all the Church with the Holy
Father astride of it down upon his
own head. 63

Herbert. Were you there?

Walter Map. In the church-rope?
—no. I was at the crowning, for I
have pleasure in the pleasure of
crowds, and to read the faces of men
at a great show.

Herbert. And how did Roger of
York comport himself? 71

Walter Map. As magnificently and
archiepiscopally as our Thomas would
have done: only there was a dare-
devil in his eye—I should say a dare-
Becket. He thought less of two kings
than of one Roger, the king of the oc-
casion. Foliot is the holier man, per-
haps the better. Once or twice there
ran a twitch across his face, as who
should say 'what's to follow?' but
Salisbury was a calf cowed by Mother
Church, and every now and then
glancing about him like a thief at
night when he hears a door open in
the house and thinks 'the master.' 86

Herbert. And the father-king?

Walter Map. The father's eye was
so tender it would have called a goose
off the green, and once he strove to
hide his face, like the Greek king

when his daughter was sacrificed, but he thought better of it. It was but the sacrifice of a kingdom to his son, a smaller matter; but as to the young crownling himself, he looked so malapert in the eyes, that had I fathered him I had given him more of the rod than the sceptre. Then followed the thunder of the captains and the shouting, and so we came on to the banquet, from whence there puffed out such an incense of unctuousity into the nostrils of our Gods of Church and State, that Lucullus or Apicius might have sniffed it in their Hades of heathenism, so that the smell of their own roast had not come across it—¹⁰⁸

Herbert. Map, tho' you make your butt too big, you overshoot it.

Walter Map. For as to the fish, they de-miracled the miraculous draught, and might have sunk a navy—

Herbert. There again, Goliassing and Goliathizing!

Walter Map. And as for the flesh at table, a whole Peter's sheet, with all manner of game, and four-footed things, and fowls—

Herbert. And all manner of creeping things too? ¹²¹

Walter Map. Well, there were abbots—but they did not bring their women; and so we were dull enough at first, but in the end we flourished out into a merriment; for the old King would act servitor and hand a dish to his son; whereupon my Lord of York—his fine-cut face bowing and beaming with all that courtesy which hath less loyalty in it than the backward scrape of the clown's heel—'great honor,' says he, 'from the King's self to the King's son.' Did you hear the young King's quip? ¹³⁵

Herbert. No, what was it?

Walter Map. Glancing at the days when his father was only Earl of Anjou, he answered, 'Should not an earl's son wait on a king's son?' And when the cold corners of the King's mouth began to thaw, there was a great motion of laughter among us, part real, part childlike, to be freed from the dulness—part royal, for King and kingling both laughed, and so we could not but laugh, as by a

royal necessity—part childlike again—when we felt we had laughed too long and could not stay ourselves—many midriff-shaken even to tears, as springs gush out after earthquakes—but from those, as I said before, there may come a conflagration—tho', to keep the figure moist and make it hold water, I should say rather, the lacrymation of a lamentation; but look if Thomas have not flung himself at the King's feet. They have made it up again—for the moment. ¹⁶⁰

Herbert. Thanks to the blessed Magdalene, whose day it is!

Re-enter HENRY and BECKET. (*During their conference the BARONS and BISHOPS OF FRANCE and ENGLAND come in at back of stage.*)

Becket. Ay, King! for in thy kingdom, as thou knowest, The spouse of the Great King, thy King, hath fallen—

The daughter of Zion lies beside the way—

The priests of Baal tread her underfoot—

The golden ornaments are stolen from her—

Henry. Have I not promised to restore her, Thomas, And send thee back again to Canterbury?

Becket. Send back again those exiles of my kin ¹⁷⁰ Who wander famine-wasted thro' the world.

Henry. Have I not promised, man, to send them back?

Becket. Yet one thing more. Thou hast broken thro' the pales Of privilege, crowning thy young son by York,

London, and Salisbury—not Canterbury.

Henry. York crown'd the Conqueror—not Canterbury.

Becket. There was no Canterbury in William's time.

Henry. But Hereford, you know, crown'd the first Henry.

Becket. But Anselm crown'd this Henry o'er again.

Henry. And thou shalt crown my Henry o'er again. ¹⁸⁰

Becket. And is it then with thy goodwill that I Proceed against thine evil councillors, And hurl the dread ban of the Church on those Who made the second mitre play the first, And acted me?

Henry. Well, well, then — have thy way! It may be they were evil councillors. What more, my lord archbishop? What more, Thomas? I make thee full amends. Say all thy say, But blaze not out before the Frenchmen here.

Becket. More? Nothing, so thy promise be thy deed. ¹⁹⁰
Henry (holding out his hand). Give me thy hand. My Lords of France and England, My friend of Canterbury and myself Are now once more at perfect amity. Unkingly should I be, and most un-knightly, Not striving still, however much in vain,

*To rival him in Christian charity.

Herbert. All praise to Heaven, and sweet Saint Magdalen!

Henry. And so farewell until we meet in England.

Becket. I fear, my liege, we may not meet in England.

Henry. How, do you make me a traitor?

Becket. No, indeed! ²⁰⁰
That be far from thee.

Henry. Come, stay with us, then, Before you part for England.

Becket. I am bound For that one hour to stay with good King Louis, Who helpt me when none else.

Herbert. He said thy life Was not one hour's worth in England save

King Henry gave thee first the kiss of peace.

Henry. He said so? Louis, did he? look you, Herbert, When I was in mine anger with King Louis,

I swear I would not give the kiss of peace, Not on French ground, nor any ground but English, ²¹⁰ Where his cathedral stands. Mine old friend, Thomas, I would there were that perfect trust between us, That health of heart, once ours, ere Pope or King Had come between us! Even now — who knows? — I might deliver all things to thy hand — If — but I say no more — farewell, my lord.

Becket. Farewell, my liege!

[*Exit Henry, then the Barons and Bishops.*]

Walter Map. There again! when the full fruit of the royal promise might have dropt into thy mouth hadst thou but opened it to thank him. ²²²

Becket. He fenced his royal promise with an *if*.

Walter Map. And is the King's *if* too high a stile for your lordship to overstep and come at all things in the next field?

Becket. Ay, if this *if* be like the devil's '*if*'

Thou wilt fall down and worship me.'

Herbert. O, Thomas, I could fall down and worship thee, my Thomas, ²³⁰ For thou hast trodden this wine-press alone.

Becket. Nay, of the people there are many with me.

Walter Map. I am not altogether with you, my lord, tho' I am none of those that would raise a storm between you, lest ye should draw together like two ships in a calm. You wrong the King: he meant what he said to-day. Who shall vouch for his to-morrows? One word further. Doth not the *fewness* of anything make the fulness of it in estimation? Is not virtue prized mainly for its rarity and great base-ness-loathed as an exception: for were all, my lord, as noble as yourself, who would look up to you? and were all as base as — who shall I say? — Fitzurse and his following — who would

look down upon them? My lord, you have put so many of the King's household out of communion, that they begin to smile at it.

Becket. At their peril, at their peril —

Walter Map. For tho' the drop may hollow out the dead stone, doth not the living skin thicken against perpetual whippings? This is the second grain of good counsel I ever proffered thee, and so cannot suffer by the rule of frequency. Have I sown it in salt? I trust not, for before God I promise you the King hath many more wolves than he can tame in his woods of England, and if it suit their purpose to howl for the King, and you still move against him, you may have no less than to die for it; but God and his free wind grant your lordship a happy home-return and the King's kiss of peace in Kent. Farewell! I must follow the King. [*Exit.*]

Herbert. Ay, and I warrant the customs. Did the King

Speak of the customs?

Becket. No! — To die for it — I live to die for it, I die to live for it. The State will die, the Church can never die.

The King's not like to die for that which dies;

But I must die for that which never dies.

It will be so — my visions in the Lord — It must be so, my friend! the wolves of England

Must murder her one shepherd, that the sheep

May feed in peace. False figure, Map would say.

Earth's falses are heaven's truths. And when my voice

Is martyr'd mute, and this man disappears,

That perfect trust may come again between us,

And there, there, there, not here I shall rejoice

To find my stray sheep back within the fold.

The crowd are scattering, let us move away!

And thence to England. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT IV

SCENE I. — THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE BOWER

Geoffrey (coming out of the wood). Light again! light again! Margery? no, that's a finer thing there. How it glitters!

Eleanor (entering). Come to me, little one. How camest thou hither?

Geoffrey. On my legs.

Eleanor. And mighty pretty legs too. Thou art the prettiest child I ever saw. Wilt thou love me?

Geoffrey. No; I only love mother.

Eleanor. Ay; and who is thy mother?

Geoffrey. They call her — But she lives secret, you see.

Eleanor. Why?

Geoffrey. Don't know why.

Eleanor. Ay, but some one comes to see her now and then. Who is he?

Geoffrey. Can't tell.

Eleanor. What does she call him?

Geoffrey. My liege.

Eleanor. Pretty one, how camest thou?

Geoffrey. There was a bit of yellow silk here and there, and it looked pretty like a glow worm, and I thought if I followed it I should find the fairies.

Eleanor. I am the fairy, pretty one, a good fairy to thy mother. Take me to her.

Geoffrey. There are good fairies and bad fairies, and sometimes she cries, and can't sleep sound o' nights because of the bad fairies.

Eleanor. She shall cry no more; she shall sleep sound enough if thou wilt take me to her. I am her good fairy.

Geoffrey. But you don't look like a good fairy. Mother does. You are not pretty, like mother.

Eleanor. We can't all of us be as pretty as thou art — (*aside*) little bastard! Come, here is a golden chain I will give thee if thou wilt lead me to thy mother.

Geoffrey. No — no gold. Mother says gold spoils all. Love is the only gold.

Eleanor. I love thy mother, my

pretty boy. Show me where thou camest out of the wood. ⁵²

Geoffrey. By this tree; but I don't know if I can find the way back again.

Eleanor. Where's the warder?

Geoffrey. Very bad. Somebody struck him.

Eleanor. Ay? who was that?

Geoffrey. Can't tell. But I heard say he had had a stroke, or you'd have heard his horn before now. Come along, then; we shall see the silk here and there, and I want my supper. ⁶³

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II

ROSAMUND'S BOWER

Rosamund. The boy so late; pray God, he be not lost!

I sent this Margery, and she comes not back;

I sent another, and she comes not back. I go myself—so many alleys, cross-

ings,

Paths, avenues—nay, if I lost him, now

The folds have fallen from the mystery And left all naked, I were lost indeed.

Enter GEOFFREY and ELEANOR.

Geoffrey, the pain thou hast put me to!

[*Seeing Eleanor.*]

Ha, you!

How came you hither?

Eleanor. Your own child brought me hither! ⁹

Geoffrey. You said you couldn't trust Margery, and I watched her and followed her into the woods, and I lost her and went on and on till I found the light and the lady, and she says she can make you sleep o' nights.

Rosamund. How dared you? Know you not this bower is secret, Of and belonging to the King of England, More sacred than his forests for the chase?

Nay, nay, Heaven help you; get you hence in haste ¹⁹

Lest worse befall you.

Eleanor. Child, I am mine own self Of and belonging to the King. The King

Hath divers ofs and ons, ofs and belongings,

Almost as many as your true Mussulman—

Belongings, paramours, whom it pleases him

To call his wives; but so it chances, child,

That I am his main paramour, his sultana.

But since the fondest pair of doves will jar,

Even in a cage of gold, we had words of late,

And thereupon he call'd my children bastards.

Do you believe that you are married to him? ³⁰

Rosamund. I should believe it.

Eleanor. You must not believe it, Because I have a wholesome medicine here

Puts that belief asleep. Your answer, beauty!

Do you believe that you are married to him?

Rosamund. Geoffrey, my boy, I saw the ball you lost in the fork of the great willow over the brook. Go. See that you do not fall in. Go. ³⁹

Geoffrey. And leave you alone with the good fairy. She calls you beauty, but I don't like her looks. Well, you bid me go, and I'll have my ball anyhow. Shall I find you asleep when I come back?

Rosamund. Go. [*Exit Geoffrey.*]

Eleanor. He is easily found again

Do you believe it?

I pray you then to take my sleeping-draught;

But if you should not care to take it—see! [*Draws a dagger.*]

What! have I scared the red rose from your face ⁵⁰

Into your heart? But this will find it there,

And dig it from the root for ever.

Rosamund. Help! help!

Eleanor. They say that walls have ears; but these, it seems, Have none! and I have none—to pity thee.

Rosamund. I do beseech you—my child is so young,

So backward too; I cannot leave him yet.

I am not so happy I could not die myself,

But the child is so young. You have children — his;

And mine is the King's child; so, if you love him —

Nay, if you love him, there is great wrong done ⁶⁰

Somehow; but if you do not — there are those

' Who say you do not love him — let me go

With my young boy, and I will hide my face,

Blacken and gipsyfy it; none shall know me;

The King shall never hear of me again, But I will beg my bread along the world

With my young boy, and God will be our guide.

! never meant you harm in any way. See, I can say no more.

Eleanor. Will you not say you are not married to him? ⁷⁰

Rosamund. Ay, madam, I can say it, if you will.

Eleanor. Then is thy pretty boy a bastard?

Rosamund. No.

Eleanor. And thou thyself a proven wanton?

Rosamund. No.

I am none such. I never loved but one.

I have heard of such that range from love to love,

Like the wild beast — if you can call it love.

I have heard of such — yea, even among those

Who sit on thrones — I never saw any such,

Never knew any such, and howsoever

You do misname me, match'd with any such, ⁸⁰

I am snow to mud.

Eleanor. The more the pity then That thy true home — the heavens — cry out for thee

Who art too pure for earth.

Enter FITZURSE.

Fitzurse. Give her to me.

Eleanor. The Judas-lover of our passion-play Hath track'd us hither.

Fitzurse. Well, why not? I follow'd You and the child: he babbled all the way.

Give her to me to make my honey-moon.

Eleanor. Ay, as the bears love honey. Could you keep her Indungeon'd from one whisper of the wind,

Dark even from a side glance of the moon, ⁹⁰

And oblietted in the centre — No! I follow out my hate and thy revenge.

Fitzurse. You bade me take revenge another way —

To bring her to the dust. — Come with me, love,

And I will love thee. — Madam, let her live.

I have a far-off burrow where the King Would miss her and for ever.

Eleanor. How sayst thou, sweet-heart?

Wilt thou go with him? he will marry thee.

Rosamund. Give me the poison; set me free of him!

[*Eleanor offers the vial.*

No, no! I will not have it.

Eleanor. Then this other, The wiser choice, because my sleeping-draught ¹⁰⁰

May bloat thy beauty out of shape, and make

Thy body loathsome even to thy child;

While this but leaves thee with a broken heart,

A doll-face blanch'd and bloodless, over which

If pretty Geoffrey do not break his own, It must be broken for him.

Rosamund. O, I see now Your purpose is to fright me — a troubadour,

You play with words. You had never used so many,

Not if you meant it, I am sure. The child — ¹¹⁰

No — mercy! No! (*Kneels.*)

Eleanor. Play! — that bosom never Heaved under the King's hand with such true passion

As at this loveless knife that stirs the riot,
Which it will quench in blood ! Slave,
if he love thee,
Thy life is worth the wrestle for it.
Arise,
And dash thyself against me that I
may slay thee !
The worm ! shall I let her go ? But
ha ! what's here ?
By very God, the cross I gave the
King !
His village darling in some lewd
caress
Has wheedled it off the King's neck to
her own. 120
By thy leave, beauty. Ay, the same !
I warrant
Thou hast sworn on this my cross a
hundred times
Never to leave him — and that merits
death,
False oath on holy cross — for thou
must leave him
To-day, but not quite yet. My good
Fitzurse,
The running down the chase is kind-
lier sport
Even than the death. Who knows
but that thy lover
May plead so pitifully, that I may
spare thee ?
Come hither, man ; stand there. (To
Rosamund.) Take thy one
chance ;
Catch at the last straw. Kneel to thy
lord Fitzurse ; 130
Crouch even because thou hatest him ;
fawn upon him
For thy life and thy son's.
Rosamund (rising). I am a Clifford.
My son a Clifford and Plantagenet.
I am to die then, tho' there stand be-
side thee
One who might grapple with thy dag-
ger, if he
Had aught of man, or thou of woman ;
or I
Would bow to such a baseness as
would make me
Most worthy of it. Both of us will
die,
And I will fly with my sweet boy to
heaven,
And shriek to all the saints among the
stars : 140

'Eleanor of Aquitaine, Eleanor of
England !
Murder'd by that adulteress Eleanor,
Whose doings are a horror to the
east,
A hissing in the west !' Have we
not heard
Raymond of Poitou, thine own uncle
— nay,
Geoffrey Plantagenet, thine own hus-
band's father —
Nay, even the accursed heathen Salad-
deen —
Strike !
I challenge thee to meet me before
God.
Answer me there.
Eleanor (raising the dagger). This
in thy bosom, fool, 150
And after in thy bastard's !
Enter BECKET from behind.
Catches hold of her arm.
Becket. Murderess !
[*The dagger falls ; they stare at
one another. After a pause.*
Eleanor. My lord, we know you
proud of your fine hand,
But having now admired it long
enough,
We find that it is mightier than it
seems —
At least mine own is frailer ; you are
laming it.
Becket. And lamed and maim'd to
dislocation, better
Than raised to take a life which Henry
bade me
Guard from the stroke that dooms
thee after death
To wail in deathless flame.
Eleanor. Nor you nor I
Have now to learn, my lord, that our
good Henry 160
Says many a thing in sudden heats
which he
Gainsays by next sunrising — often
ready
To tear himself for having said as
much.
My lord, Fitzurse —
Becket. He too ! what dost thou
here ?
Dares the bear slouch into the lion's
den ?
One downward plunge of his paw
would rend away



ELLEN TERRY AS ROSAMUND

Eyesight and manhood, life itself,
from thee.

Go, lest I blast thee with anathema,
And make thee a world's horror.

Fitzurse. My lord, I shall
Remember this.

Becket. I do remember thee;
Lest I remember thee to the lion, go.

[Exit Fitzurse.]
Take up your dagger; put it in the
sheath. 172

Eleanor. Might not your courtesy
stoop to hand it me?
But crowns must bow when mitres sit
so high.

Well — well — too costly to be left or
lost. *[Picks up the dagger.]*

I had it from an Arab soldan, who,
When I was there in Antioch, mar-
vell'd at

Our unfamiliar beauties of the
west;

But wonder'd more at my much con-
stancy

To the monk-king, Louis, our former
burthen, 180

From whom, as being too kin, you
know, my lord,
God's grace and Holy Church deliver'd
us.

I think, time given, I could have
talk'd him out of
His ten wives into one. Look at the
hilt.
What excellent workmanship! In our
poor west
We cannot do it so well.

Becket. We can do worse.
Madam, I saw your dagger at her
throat;

I heard your savage cry.

Eleanor. Well acted, was it?
A comedy meant to seem a tragedy —
A feint, a farce. My honest lord, you
are known ¹⁹⁰

Thro' all the courts of Christendom as
one

That mars a cause with over vio-
lence.

You have wrong'd Fitzurse. I speak
not of myself.

We thought to scare this minion of
the King

Back from her churchless commerce
with the King

To the fond arms of her first love,
Fitzurse,

Who swore to marry her. You have
spoil'd the farce.

My savage cry? Why, she — she —
when I strove

To work against her license for her
good,

Bark'd out at me such monstrous
charges that ²⁰⁰

The King himself, for love of his own
sons,

If hearing, would have spurn'd her;
whereupon

I menaced her with this, as when we
threaten

A yelper with a stick. Nay, I deny not
That I was somewhat anger'd. Do
you hear me?

Believe or no, I care not. You have
lost

The ear of the King. I have it. — My
lord paramount,

Our great High-priest, will not your
Holiness

Vouchsafe a gracious answer to your
Queen?

Becket. Rosamund hath not answer'd
you one word; ²¹⁰

Madam, I will not answer you one
word.

Daughter, the world hath trick'd thee.
Leave it, daughter;

Come thou with me to Godstow nun-
nery,

And live what may be left thee of a
life

Saved as by miracle alone with
Him

Who gave it.

Re-enter GEOFFREY.

Geoffrey. Mother, you told me a
great fib; it was n't in the willow.

Becket. Follow us, my son, and we
will find it for thee —

Or something manlier. ²²⁰
[*Exeunt Becket, Rosamund, and*
Geoffrey.

Eleanor. The world hath trick'd her
— that's the King; if so,

There was the farce, the feint — not
mine. And yet

I am all but sure my dagger was a
feint

Till the worm turn'd — not life shot
up in blood,

But death drawn in; — (*looking at the*
vial) *this* was no feint, then?

no.

But can I swear to that, had she but
given

Plain answer to plain query? nay, me-
thinks

Had she but bowed herself to meet
the wave

Of humiliation, worshipt whom she
loathed,

I should have let her be, scorn'd her too
much ²³⁰

To harm her. Henry — Becket tells
him this —

To take my life might lose him Aquit-
taine.

Too politic for that. Imprison me?
No, for it came to nothing — only a
feint.

Did she not tell me I was playing on
her?

I'll swear to mine own self it was a
feint.

Why should I swear, Eleanor, who am,
or was,

A sovereign power? The King plucks
out their eyes

Who anger him, and shall not I, the
Queen,

Tear out her heart — kill, kill with
knife or venom
One of his slanderous harlots? 'None
of such?'²⁴⁰
I love her none the more. Tut, the
chance gone,
She lives — but not for him; one
point is gain'd.
O, I that thro' the Pope divorced King
Louis,
Scorning his monkery, — I that wedded
Henry,
Honoring his manhood — will he not
mock at me,
The jealous fool balk'd of her will —
with him?
But he and he must never meet again.
Reginald Fitzurse!

Re-enter FITZURSE.

Fitzurse. Here, Madam, at your
pleasure.

Eleanor. My pleasure is to have a
man about me.²⁵⁰
Why did you slink away so like a
cur?

Fitzurse. Madam, I am as much
man as the King.
Madam, I fear Church-censures like
your King.

Eleanor. He grovels to the Church
when he's black-blooded,
But kinglike fought the proud arch-
bishop, — kinglike
Defied the Pope, and, like his kingly
sires,
The Normans, striving still to break or
bind

The spiritual giant with our island
laws

And customs, made me for the mo-
ment proud

Even of that stale Church-bond which
link'd me with him²⁶⁰

To bear him kingly sons. I am not so
sure

But that I love him still. Thou as
much man!

No more of that; we will to France
and be

Beforehand with the King, and brew
from out

This Godstow-Becket intermeddling
such

A strong hate-philtre as may madden
him — madden

Against his priest beyond all hellebore.

ACT V

SCENE I. — CASTLE IN NORMANDY.
KING'S CHAMBER

HENRY, ROGER OF YORK, FOLIOT,
JOCELYN OF SALISBURY.

Roger of York. Nay, nay, my liege,
He rides abroad with armed follow-
ers,
Hath broken all his promises to thy-
self,
Cursed and anathematized us right and
left,
Stirr'd up a party there against your
son —

Henry. Roger of York, you always
hated him,
Even when you both were boys at
Theobald's.

Roger of York. I always hated
boundless arrogance.
In mine own cause I strove against
him there,
And in thy cause I strive against him
now.¹⁰

Henry. I cannot think he moves
against my son,
Knowing right well with what a ten-
derness
He loved my son.

Roger of York. Before you made
him king.
But Becket ever moves against a king.
The Church is all — the crime to be a
king.

We trust your Royal Grace, lord of
more land

Than any crown in Europe, will not
yield

To lay your neck beneath your citi-
zen's heel.

Henry. Not to a Gregory of my
throning! No.

Foliot. My royal liege, in aiming at
your love,²⁰

It may be sometimes I have overshot
My duties to our Holy Mother Church,
Tho' all the world allows I fall no
inch

Behind this Becket, rather go beyond
In scourgings, macerations, mortify-
ings,

Fasts, disciplines that clear the spirit
ual eye,

And break the soul from earth. Let
all that be.

I boast not; but you know thro' all
this quarrel

I still have cleaved to the crown, in
hope the crown

Would cleave to me that but obey'd
the crown,

Crowning your son; for which our
loyal service,

And since we likewise swore to obey
the customs,

York and myself, and our good Salis-
bury here,

Are push'd from out communion of
the Church.

Jocelyn of Salisbury. Becket hath
trodden on us like worms, my
liege,

Trodden one half dead; one half, but
half alive,

Cries to the King.

Henry (aside). Take care o' thyself,
O King!

Jocelyn of Salisbury. Being so
crush'd and so humiliated

We scarcely dare to bless the food we
eat

Because of Becket.

Henry. What would ye have me do?

Roger of York. Summon your bar-
ons; take their counsel; yet

I know—could swear—as long as
Becket breathes,

Your Grace will never have one quiet
hour.

Henry. What?—Ay—but pray
you do not work upon me.

I see your drift—it may be so—and
yet

You know me easily anger'd. Will
you hence?

He shall absolve you—you shall have
redress.

I have a dizzying headache. Let me
rest.

I'll call you by and by.

[*Exeunt Roger of York, Foliot, and
Jocelyn of Salisbury.*]

Would he were dead! I have lost all
love for him.

If God would take him in some sudden
way—

Would he were dead! [*Lies down.*]

Page (entering). My liege, the Queen
of England.

Henry. God's eyes! [*Starting up.
Enter ELEANOR.*]

Eleanor. Of England? Say of Aquit-
taine.

I am no Queen of England. I had
dream'd

I was the bride of England, and a
queen.

Henry. And,—while you dream'd
you were the bride of England,—
Stirring her baby-king against me?
ha!

Eleanor. The brideless Becket is
thy king and mine;

I will go live and die in Aquitaine.

Henry. Except I clap thee into
prison here,

Lest thou shouldst play the wanton
there again.

Ha, you of Aquitaine! O you of Aquit-
taine!

You were but Aquitaine to Louis—no
wife;

You are only Aquitaine to me—no
wife.

Eleanor. And why, my lord, should
I be wife to one

That only wedded me for Aquitaine?
Yet this no-wife—her six and thirty
sail

Of Provence blew you to your English
throne;

And this no-wife has borne you four
brave sons,

And one of them at least is like to
prove

Bigger in our small world than thou
art.

Henry. Ay—

Richard, if he be mine—I hope his
mine.

But thou art like enough to make him
thine.

Eleanor. Becket is like enough to
make all his.

Henry. Methought I had recover'd
of the Becket,

That all was planed and bevell'd
smooth again,

Save from some hateful cantrip of
thine own.

Eleanor. I will go live and die in
Aquitaine.

I dream'd I was the consort of a king,
Not one whose back his priest has
broken.

Henry. What! 80
Is the end come? You, will you crown
my foe

My victor in mid-battle? I will be
Sole master of my house. The end is
mine.

What game, what juggle, what devilry
are you playing?

Why do you thrust this Becket on me
again?

Eleanor. Why? for I am true wife,
and have my fears
Lest Becket thrust you even from
your throne.

Do you know this cross, my liege?

Henry (turning his head). Away!
not I.

Eleanor. Not even the central diamond,
worth, I think,
Half of the Antioch whence I had it.

Henry. That?

Eleanor. I gave it you, and you
your paramour; 91

She sends it back, as being dead to
earth,

So dead henceforth to you.

Henry. Dead! you have murder'd
her,

Found out her secret bower and murder'd
her.

Eleanor. Your Becket knew the
secret of your bower.

Henry (calling out). Ho there! thy
rest of life is hopeless prison.

Eleanor. And what would my own
Aquitaine say to that?

First, free thy captive from her hopeless
prison.

Henry. O devil, can I free her from
the grave?

Eleanor. You are too tragic; both
of us are players 100

In such a comedy as our court of Provence

Had laugh'd at. That's a delicate
Latin lay

Of Walter Map: the lady holds the
cleric

Lovelier than any soldier, his poor
tonsure

A crown of Empire. Will you have
it again?

(Offering the cross. He dashes it down.)
Saint Cupid, that is too irreverent.

Then mine once more. *(Puts it on.)*
Your cleric hath your lady.

Nay, what uncomely faces, could he
see you!

Foam at the mouth because King
Thomas, lord 109

Not only of your vassals but amours,
Thro' chastest honor of the Decalogue
Hath used the full authority of his
Church

To put her into Godstow nunnery.

Henry. To put her into Godstow
nunnery!

He dared not—liar! yet, yet I remember—

I do remember.

He bade me put her into a nunnery—
Into Godstow, into Hellstow, Devil-
stow!

The Church! the Church!

God's eyes! I would the Church were
down in hell! *[Exit.]*

Eleanor. Aha! 121

Enter the four KNIGHTS.

Fitzurse. What made the King cry
out so furiously?

Eleanor. Our Becket, who will not
absolve the bishops.

I think ye four have cause to love this
Becket.

Fitzurse. I hate him for his insolence
to all.

De Tracy. And I for all his insolence
to thee.

De Brito. I hate him for I hate him
is my reason,

And yet I hate him for a hypocrite.

De Morville. I do not love him, for
he did his best

To break the barons, and now braves
the King. 130

Eleanor. Strike, then, at once, the
King would have him—See!

Re-enter HENRY.

Henry. No man to love me, honor
me, obey me!

Sluggards and fools!

The slave that eat my bread has kick'd
his King!

The dog I cramm'd with dainties worried
me!

The fellow that on a lame jade came
to court,

A ragged cloak for saddle—he, he, he,
To shake my throne, to push into my
chamber—

My bed, where even the slave is private—he—

I'll have her out again, he shall ab-
 solve ¹⁴⁰
 The bishops—they but did my will
 —not you—
 Sluggards and fools, why do you
 stand and stare?
 You are no King's men—you—you
 —you are Becket's men.
 Down with King Henry! up with the
 Archbishop!
 Will no man free me from this pesti-
 lent priest? *[Exit.*
[The Knights draw their swords.
Eleanor. Are ye King's men? I
 am King's woman, I.
The Knights. King's men! King's
 men!

SCENE II

A ROOM IN CANTERBURY MONASTERY

BECKET and JOHN OF SALISBURY.

Becket. York said so?*John of Salisbury.* Yes: a man may
 take good counsel

Even from his foe.

Becket. York will say anything.
 What is he saying now? gone to the
 KingAnd taken our anathema with him.
 York!Can the King de-anathematize this
 York?*John of Salisbury.* Thomas, I would
 thou hadst return'd to Eng-
 landLike some wise prince of this world
 from his wars,With more of olive-branch and am-
 nestyFor foes at home—thou hast raised
 the world against thee.*Becket.* Why, John, my kingdom is
 not of this world. ¹⁰*John of Salisbury.* If it were more
 of this world it might beMore of the next. A policy of wise
 pardonWins here as well as there. To bless
 thine enemies—*Becket.* Ay, mine, not Heaven's.*John of Salisbury.* And may there
 not be somethingOf this world's leaven in thee too,
 when cryingOn Holy Church to thunder out her
 rights

And thine own wrong so pitilessly?

Ah, Thomas,

The lightnings that we think are only
 Heaven'sFlash sometimes out of earth against
 the heavens.The soldier, when he lets his whole
 self go ²⁰Lost in the common good, the com-
 mon wrong,Strikes truest even for his own self.
 I craveThy pardon—I have still thy leave
 to speak.Thou hast waged God's war against
 the King; and yetWe are self-uncertain creatures, and
 we may,Yea, even when we know not, mix
 our spitesAnd private hates with our defence
 of Heaven.*Enter EDWARD GRIM.**Becket.* Thou art but yesterday
 from Cambridge, Grim;

What say ye there of Becket?

Grim. I believe himThe bravest in our roll of primates
 down ³⁰From Austin—there are some—for
 there are men

Of canker'd judgment everywhere—

Becket. Who hold

With York, with York against me.

Grim. Well, my lord,

A stranger monk desires access to you.

Becket. York against Canterbury,

York against God!

I am open to him. *[Exit Grim.**Enter ROSAMUND as a Monk.**Rosamund.* Can I speak with you
 Alone, my father?*Becket.* Come you to confess?*Rosamund.* Not now.*Becket.* Then speak; this is my
 other self,Who, like my conscience, never lets
 me be.*Rosamund (throwing back the cowl).*I know him, our good John of
 Salisbury. ⁴⁰

Becket. Breaking already from thy novitiate
To plunge into this bitter world again —

These wells of Marah! I am grieved,
my daughter.
I thought that I had made a peace for thee.

Rosamund. Small peace was mine
in my novitiate, father.

Thro' all closed doors a dreadful
whisper crept

That thou wouldst excommunicate
the King.

I could not eat, sleep, pray. I had
with me

The monk's disguise thou gavest me
for my bower;

I think our abbess knew it and allow'd
it.

I fled, and found thy name a charm
to get me

Food, roof, and rest. I met a robber
once;

I told him I was bound to see the
archbishop:

'Pass on,' he said, and in thy name I
pass'd

From house to house. In one a son
stone-blind

Sat by his mother's hearth. He had
gone too far

Into the King's own woods; and the
poor mother,

Soon as she learnt I was a friend of
thine,

Cried out against the cruelty of the
King.

I said it was the King's courts, not
the King,

But she would not believe me, and
she wish'd

The Church were king; she had seen
the archbishop once,

So mild, so kind. The people love
thee, father.

Becket. Alas! when I was Chan-
cellor to the King,

I fear I was as cruel as the King.

Rosamund. Cruel? O, no — it is
the law, not he;

The customs of the realm.

Becket. The customs! customs!
Rosamund. My lord, you have not
excommunicated him?

O, if you have, absolve him!

Becket. Daughter, daughter,
Deal not with things you know not.

Rosamund. I know him.
Then you have done it, and I call you
cruel.

John of Salisbury. No, daughter,
you mistake our good arch-
bishop;

For once in France the King had been
so harsh,

He thought to excommunicate him —
Thomas,

You could not — old affection mas-
ter'd you,

You falter'd into tears.

Rosamund. God bless him for it!

Becket. Nay, make me not a wo-
man, John of Salisbury,

Nor make me traitor to my holy
office.

Did not a man's voice ring along the
aisle,

'The King is sick and almost unto
death.'

How could I excommunicate him
then?

Rosamund. And wilt thou excom-
municate him now?

Becket. Daughter, my time is short,
I shall not do it.

And were it longer — well — I should
not do it.

Rosamund. Thanks in this life, and
in the life to come!

Becket. Get thee back to thy nun-
nery with all haste;

Let this be thy last trespass. But one
question —

How fares thy pretty boy, the little
Geoffrey?

No fever, cough, croup, sickness?

Rosamund. No, but saved
From all that by our solitude. The
plagues

That smite the city spare the solitudes.

Becket. God save him from all sick-
ness of the soul!

Thee too, thy solitude among thy
nuns,

May that save thee! Doth he remem-
ber me?

Rosamund. I warrant him.

Becket. He is marvellously like
thee.

Rosamund. Likier the King.

Becket. No, daughter.

Rosamund. Ay, but wait
Till his nose rises: he will be very
king.

Becket. Even so; but think not of
the King. Farewell!

Rosamund. My lord, the city is full
of armed men.

Becket. Even so. Farewell!

Rosamund. I will but pass to ves-
pers,¹⁰⁰
And breathe one prayer for my liege-
lord the King,
His child and mine own soul, and so
return.

Becket. Pray for me too; much
need of prayer have I.

[*Rosamund kneels and goes.*]

Dan John, how much we lose, we
celibates,
Lacking the love of woman and of
child!

John of Salisbury. More gain than
loss; for of your wives you
shall

Find one a slut whose fairest linen
seems
Foul as her dust-cloth, if she used it
— one

So charged with tongue that every
thread of thought

Is broken ere it joins— a shrew to
boot,¹¹⁰

Whose evil song far on into the night
Thrills to the topmost tile— no hope
but death;

One slow, fat, white, a burthen of the
hearth;

And one that being thwarted ever
swoons

And weeps herself into the place of
power;

And one an *uzor pauperis Ibyci.*

So rare the household honey-making
bee,

Man's help! but we, we have the
Blessed Virgin

For worship, and our Mother Church
for bride;

And all the souls we saved and fa-
ther'd here¹²⁰

Will greet us as our babes in Para-
dise.

What noise was that? she told us of
arm'd men

Here in the city. Will you not with-
draw?

Becket. I once was out with Henry
in the days

When Henry loved me, and we came
upon

A wild-fowl sitting on her nest, so still
I reach'd my hand and touch'd; she
did not stir;

The snow had frozen round her, and
she sat

Stone-dead upon a heap of ice-cold
eggs.

Look! how this love, this mother,
runs thro' all

The world God made—even the
beast—the bird!¹³⁰

John of Salisbury. Ay, still a lover
of the beast and bird?

But these arm'd men—will you not
hide yourself?

Perchance the fierce De Brocs from
Saltwood Castle,

To assail our Holy Mother lest she
brood

Too long o'er this hard egg, the world,
and send

Her whole heart's heat into it, till it
break

Into young angels. Pray you, hide
yourself.

Becket. There was a little fair-
hair'd Norman maid

Lived in my mother's house; if Rosa-
mund is¹⁴⁰

The world's rose, as her name imports
her—she

Was the world's lily.

John of Salisbury. Ay, and what
of her?

Becket. She died of leprosy.

John of Salisbury. I know not why
You call these old things back again,
my lord.

Becket. The drowning man, they
say, remembers all

The chances of his life, just ere he
dies.

John of Salisbury. Ay—but these
arm'd men—will you drown
yourself?

He loses half the meed of martyrdom
Who will be martyr when he might
escape.

Becket. What day of the week?
Tuesday?

John of Salisbury. Tuesday, my
lord.¹⁵⁰

Becket. On a Tuesday was I born,
 and on a Tuesday
 Baptized; and on a Tuesday did I fly
 Forth from Northampton; on a Tuesday
 pass'd
 From England into bitter banishment;
 On a Tuesday at Pontigny came to
 me
 The ghostly warning of my martyr-
 dom;
 On a Tuesday from mine exile I re-
 turn'd,

And on a Tuesday —

*TRACY enters, then FITZURSE, DE
 BRITO, and DE MORVILLE. MONKS
 following.*

— on a Tuesday — Tracy!
*(A long silence, broken by Fitzurse
 saying, contemptuously.)*

God help thee!

John of Salisbury (aside). How the
 good archbishop reddens!
 He never yet could brook the note of
 scorn.

16c



'The Mother Church of England,
 My Canterbury'

Fitzurse. My lord, we bring a message from the King
Beyond the water; will you have it
alone,

Or with these listeners near you?

Becket. As you will.

Fitzurse. Nay, as *you* will.

Becket. Nay, as *you* will.

John of Salisbury. Why, then,
Better perhaps to speak with them
apart.

Let us withdraw.

[*All go out except the four Knights
and Becket.*]

Fitzurse. We are all alone with him.
Shall I not smite him with his own
cross-staff?

De Morville. No, look! the door is
open: let him be.

Fitzurse. The King condemns your
excommunicating—

Becket. This is no secret, but a
public matter. 170
In here again!

JOHN OF SALISBURY and MONKS re-
turn.

Now, sirs, the King's commands!

Fitzurse. The King beyond the
water, thro' our voices,

Commands you to be dutiful and leal
To your young King on this side of
the water,

Not scorn him for the foibles of his
youth.

What! you would make his corona-
tion void

By cursing those who crown'd him.
Out upon you!

Becket. Reginald, all men know I
loved the prince.

His father gave him to my care,
and I

Became his second father. He had
his faults, 180

For which I would have laid mine
own life down

To help him from them, since indeed
I loved him,

And love him next after my lord his
father.

Rather than dim the splendor of his
crown

I fain would treble and quadruple it
With revenues, realms, and golden
provinces

So that were done in equity.

Fitzurse. You have broken
Your bond of peace, your treaty with
the King—

Wakening such brawls and loud dis-
turbances

In England, that he calls you over-
sea 190

To answer for it in his Norman
courts.

Becket. Prate not of bonds, for
never, O, never again

Shall the waste voice of the bond-
breaking sea

Divide me from the mother church of
England,

My Canterbury. Loud disturbances!
O, ay—the bells rang out even to

deafening,
Organ and pipe, and dulcimer, chants
and hymns

In all the churches, trumpets in the
halls,

Sobs, laughter, cries; they spread their
raiment down

Before me—would have made my
pathway flowers, 200

Save that it was midwinter in the
street,

But full midsummer in those honest
hearts.

Fitzurse. The King commands
you to absolve the bishops

Whom you have excommunicated.

Becket. I?
Not I, the Pope. Ask *him* for abso-
lution.

Fitzurse. But you advised the
Pope.

Becket. And so I did.
They have but to submit.

The Four Knights. The King com-
mands you.

We are all King's men.

Becket. King's men at least should
know

That their own King closed with me
last July

That I should pass the censures of the
Church 210

On those that crown'd young Henry
in this realm,

And trampled on the rights of Canter-
bury.

Fitzurse. What! dare you charge
the King with treachery?

He sanction thee to excommunicate

The prelates whom he chose to crown
his son!

Becket. I spake no word of treachery,
Reginald.

But for the truth of this I make
appeal

To all the archbishops, bishops, prelates,
barons,

Monks, knights, five hundred, that
were there and heard.

Nay, you yourself were there; you
heard yourself. 220

Fitzurse. I was not there.

Becket. I saw you there.

Fitzurse. I was not.

Becket. You were. I never forget
anything.

Fitzurse. He makes the King a
traitor, me a liar.

How long shall we forbear him?

*John of Salisbury (drawing Becket
aside).* O my good lord,

Speak with them privately on this
hereafter.

You see they have been revelling, and
I fear

Are braced and brazen'd up with
Christmas wines

For any murderous brawl.

Becket. And yet they prate
Of mine, my brawls, when those that
name themselves

Of the King's part have broken down
our barns, 230

Wasted our diocese, outraged our
tenants,

Lifted our produce, driven our clerics
out—

Why they, your friends, those ruffians,
the De Brocs,

They stood on Dover beach to murder
me,

They slew my stags in mine own
manor here,

Mutilated, poor brute, my sumpter-
mule,

Plunder'd the vessel full of Gascon
wine,

The old King's present, carried off the
casks,

Kill'd half the crew, dungeon'd the
other half

In Pevensey Castle—

De Morville. Why not rather then,
If this be so, complain to your young
King, 241

Not punish of your own authority?

Becket. Mine enemies barr'd all
access to the boy.

They knew he loved me.

Hugh, Hugh, how proudly you exalt
your head!

Nay, when they seek to overturn our
rights,

I ask no leave of king, or mortal man,
To set them straight again. Alone I

do it.

Give to the King the things that are
the King's,

And those of God to God.

Fitzurse. Threats! threats! ye hear
him. 250

What! will he excommunicate all the
world?

[*The Knights come round Becket.*

De Tracy. He shall not.

De Brito. Well, as yet—I should
be grateful—

He hath not excommunicated me.

Becket. Because thou wast born ex-
communicate.

I never spied in thee one gleam of
grace.

De Brito. Your Christian's Chris-
tian charity!

Becket. By Saint Denis—

De Brito. Ay, by Saint Denis, now
will he flame out,

And lose his head as old Saint Denis
did.

Becket. Ye think to scare me from
my loyalty

To God and to the Holy Father. No!
Tho' all the swords in England flash'd
above me 261

Ready to fall at Henry's word or
yours—

Tho' all the loud-lung'd trumpets
upon earth

Blared from the heights of all the
thrones of her kings,

Blowing the world against me, I would
stand

Clothed with the full authority of
Rome,

Mail'd in the perfect panoply of faith,
First of the foremost of their files who
die

For God, to people heaven in the
great day

When God makes up his jewels. Once
I fled— 270

Never again, and you — I marvel at you —

Ye know what is between us. Ye have sworn

Yourselves my men when I was Chancellor —

My vassals — and yet threaten your archbishop
In his own house.

Knights. Nothing can be between us

That goes against our fealty to the King.

Fitzurse. And in his name we charge you that ye keep

This traitor from escaping.

Becket. Rest you easy,
For I am easy to keep. I shall not fly.
Here, here, here will you find me.

De Morville. Know you not
You have spoken to the peril of your life ?

Becket. As I shall speak again.

Fitzurse, De Tracy, and De Brito.
To arms !

[*They rush out, De Morville lingers.*

Becket. De Morville,
I had thought so well of you ; and even now

You seem the least assassin of the four.
O, do not damn yourself for company !
Is it too late for me to save your soul ?
I pray you for one moment stay and speak.

De Morville. Becket, it is too late.

[*Exit.*

Becket. Is it too late ?
Too late on earth may be too soon in hell.

Knights (in the distance). Close the great gate — ho, there — upon the town !

Becket's Retainers. Shut the hall-doors !

[*A pause.*

Becket. You hear them, brother John ;
Why do you stand so silent, brother John ?

John of Salisbury. For I was musing on an ancient saw,
Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re ;
Is strength less strong when hand-in-hand with grace ?

Gratior in pulchro corpore virtus.
Thomas,

Why should you heat yourself for such as these ?

Becket. Methought I answer'd moderately enough.

John of Salisbury. As one that blows the coal to cool the fire.

299

My lord, I marvel why you never lean on any man's advising but your own.

Becket. Is it so, Dan John ? well, what should I have done ?

John of Salisbury. You should have taken counsel with your friends
Before these bandits brake into your presence.

They seek — you make — occasion for your death.

Becket. My counsel is already taken, John.

I am prepared to die.

John of Salisbury. We are sinners all,
The best of all not all-prepared to die.

Becket. God's will be done !

John of Salisbury. Ay, well. God's will be done !

Grim (re-entering). My lord, the knights are arming in the garden

310

Beneath the sycamore.

Becket. Good ! let them arm.

Grim. And one of the De Brocs is with them, Robert,
The apostate monk that was with Randolph here.

He knows the twists and turnings of the place.

Becket. No fear !

Grim. No fear, my lord.

[*Crashes on the hall-doors. The Monks flee.*

Becket (rising). Our dovecote flown !
I cannot tell why monks should all be cowards.

John of Salisbury. Take refuge in your own cathedral, Thomas.

Becket. Do they not fight the Great Fiend day by day ?

Valor and holy life should go together.
Why should all monks be cowards ?

John of Salisbury. Are they so ?
I say, take refuge in your own cathedral.

321

Becket. Ay, but I told them I would wait them here.

Grim. May they not say you dared not show yourself

In your old place ? and vespers are beginning.

[*Bell rings for vespers till end of scene.*

You should attend the office, give them heart.

They fear you slain; they dread they know not what.

Becket. Ay, monks, not men.

Grim. I am a monk, my lord.

Perhaps, my lord, you wrong us. Some would stand by you to the death.

Becket. Your pardon.
John of Salisbury. He said, 'Attend the office.'

Becket. Attend the office?

Why then—the Cross!—who bears my Cross before me? ³³¹

Methought they would have brain'd me with it, John. [*Grim takes it.*]

Grim. I! Would that I could bear thy cross indeed!

Becket. The mitre!

John of Salisbury. Will you wear it?—there!

[*Becket puts on the mitre.*]

Becket. The pall!
I go to meet my King!

[*Puts on the pall.*]

Grim. To meet the King?

[*Crashes on the doors as they go out.*]

John of Salisbury. Why do you move with such a stateliness?

Can you not hear them yonder like a storm,

Battering the doors, and breaking thro' the walls?

Becket. Why do the heathen rage?

My two good friends,

What matters murder'd here, or murder'd there? ³⁴⁰

And yet my dream foretold my martyrdom

In mine own church. It is God's will. Go on.

Nay, drag me not. We must not seem to fly.

SCENE III

NORTH TRANSEPT OF CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

On the right hand a flight of steps leading to the Choir, another flight on the left, leading to the North Aisle. Winter afternoon slowly darkening. Low thunder now and then of an approaching storm. MONKS heard chanting the service. ROSAMUND kneeling.

Rosamund. O blessed saint, O glorious Benedict,—

These arm'd men in the city, these fierce faces—

Thy holy follower founded Canterbury—

Save that dear head which now is Canterbury,

Save him, he saved my life, he saved my child,

Save him, his blood would darken Henry's name;

Save him till all as saintly as thyself He miss the searching flame of purgatory,

And pass at once perfect to Paradise.

[*Noise of steps and voices in the cloisters.*]

Hark! Is it they? Coming! He is not here— ¹⁰

Not yet, thank heaven. O, save him!

[*Goes up steps leading to choir.*]

Becket (entering, forced along by John of Salisbury and Grim). No, I tell you!

I cannot bear a hand upon my person; Why do you force me thus against my will?

Grim. My lord, we force you from your enemies.

Becket. As you would force a king from being crown'd.

John of Salisbury. We must not force the crown of martyrdom.

[*Service stops. Monks come down from the stairs that lead to the choir.*]

Monks. Here is the great archbishop! He lives! he lives!

Die with him, and be glorified together.

Becket. Together?—get you back! go on with the office.

Monks. Come, then, with us to ves pers.

Becket. How can I come ²⁰ When you so block the entry? Back, I say!

Go on with the office. Shall not Heaven be served

Tho' earth's last earthquake clash'd the minster-bells,

And the great deeps were broken up again,

And hiss'd against the sun?

[*Noise in the cloisters.*]

Monks. The murderers, hark! Let us hide! let us hide!

Becket. What do these people fear?
Monks. Those arm'd men in the cloister.

Becket. Be not such cravens!
 I will go out and meet them.

Grim and Others. Shut the doors!
 We will not have him slain before our face.

[*They close the doors of the transept.*
Knocking.

Fly, fly, my lord, before they burst the doors! [*Knocking.*

Becket. Why, these are our own monks who follow'd us! 31
 And will you bolt them out, and have them slain?

Undo the doors; the church is not a castle.

Knock, and it shall be open'd. Are you deaf?

What have I lost authority among you?
 Stand by, make way!

Opens the doors. Enter Monks from cloister.

Come in, my friends, come in!
 Nay, faster, faster!

Monks. O, my lord archbishop,
 A score of knights all arm'd with swords and axes —

To the choir, to the choir!

[*Monks divide, part flying by the stairs on the right, part by those on the left. The rush of these last bears Becket along with them some way up the steps, where he is left standing alone.*

Becket. Shall I too pass to the choir,
 And die upon the patriarchal throne
 Of all my predecessors?

John of Salisbury. No, to the crypt!
 Twenty steps down. Stumble not in the darkness, 42

Lest they should seize thee.

Grim. To the crypt? no — no,
 To the chapel of Saint Blaise beneath the roof!

John of Salisbury (pointing upward and downward). That way or this! Save thyself either way.

Becket. O, no, not either way, nor any way
 Save by that way which leads thro' night to light.

Not twenty steps, but one.
 And fear not I should stumble in the darkness,

Not tho' it be their hour, the power of darkness, 50
 But my hour too, the power of light in darkness!

I am not in the darkness but the light,
 Seen by the Church in heaven, the Church on earth —

The power of life in death to make her free!

Enter the four KNIGHTS. JOHN OF SALISBURY flies to the altar of Saint Benedict.

Fitzurse. Here, here, King's men!
 [*Catches hold of the last flying Monk.*

Where is the traitor Becket?

Monk. I am not he! I am not he, my lord.

I am not he indeed!

Fitzurse. Hence to the fiend!
 [*Pushes him away.*

Where is this treble traitor to the King?

De Tracy. Where is the archbishop, Thomas Becket?

Becket. Here.

No traitor to the King, but Priest of God, 60

Primate of England.

[*Descending into the transept.*

I am he ye seek.

What would ye have of me?

Fitzurse. Your life.

De Tracy. Your life.

De Morville. Save that you will absolve the bishops.

Becket. Never, —
 Except they make submission to the Church.

You had my answer to that cry before.

De Morville. Why, then you are a dead man; flee!

Becket. I will not.
 I am readier to be slain than thou to slay.

Hugh, I know well thou hast but half a heart

To bathe this sacred pavement with my blood.

God pardon thee and these, but God's full curse 70

Shatter you all to pieces if ye harm One of my flock!

Fitzurse. Was not the great gate shut?

They are thronging in to vespers — half the town.



TRANSEPT OF MARTYRDOM, CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL

We shall be overwhelm'd. Seize him
and carry him !

Come with us — nay — thou art our
prisoner — come !

De Morville. Ay, make him prisoner,
do not harm the man.

[*Fitzurse lays hold of the Arch-
bishop's pall.*

Becket. Touch me not !

De Brito. How the good priest gods
himself !

He is not yet ascended to the Father.

Fitzurse. I will not only touch, but
drag thee hence.

Becket. Thou art my man, thou art
my vassal. Away ! 80

[*Flings him off till he reels, almost
to falling.*

De Tracy (lays hold of the pall).
Come ; as he said, thou art our
prisoner.

Becket. Down !

[*Throws him headlong.*

*Fitzurse (advances with drawn
sword).* I told thee that I should
remember thee !

Becket. Profligate pander !

Fitzurse. Do you hear that ? Strike,
strike.

[*Strikes off the Archbishop's mitre,
and wounds him in the forehead.*

Becket (covers his eyes with his hand).
I do commend my cause to God,
the Virgin,

Saint Denis of France and Saint Al-
phege of England,

And all the tutelar Saints of Canterbury.

[*Grim wraps his arms about the
Archbishop.*

Spare this defence, dear brother.

[*Tracy has arisen, and approaches,
hesitatingly, with his sword
raised.*

Fitzurse. Strike him, Tracy !
*Rosamund (rushing down steps from
the choir).* No, no, no, no !

Fitzurse. This wanton here. *De
Morville,*

Hold her away.

De Morville. I hold her.

*Rosamund (held back by De Morville,
and stretching out her arms).*

Mercy, mercy,
As you would hope for mercy!

Fitzurse. Strike, I say!

Grim. O God, O noble knights, O
sacrilege!

Strike our archbishop in his own
cathedral!

The Pope, the King, will curse you
— the whole world

Abhor you; ye will die the death of
dogs!

Nay, nay, good Tracy.

[*Lifts his arm.*]

Fitzurse. Answer not, but strike.

De Tracy. There is my answer then.

[*Sword falls on Grim's arm, and
glances from it, wounding
Becket.*]

Grim. Mine arm is sever'd.

I can no more — fight out the good
fight — die

Conqueror.

[*Staggering into the chapel of Saint
Benedict.*]

Becket (*falling on his knees*). At the
right hand of Power —

Power and great glory — for thy
Church, O Lord —

Into thy hands, O Lord — into thy
hands! — [*Sinks prone.*]

De Brito. This last to rid thee of a
world of brawls! (*Kills him.*)

The traitor's dead, and will arise no
more.

Fitzurse. Nay, have we still'd him?

What! the great archbishop!

Does he breathe? No?

De Tracy. No, Reginald, he is dead.

[*Storm bursts.*]¹

De Morville. Will the earth gape
and swallow us?

De Brito. The deed's done —

Away!

[*De Brito, De Tracy, Fitzurse,
rush out, crying 'King's men!'*
De Morville follows slowly.
*Flashes of lightning thro' the
Cathedral. Rosamund seen
kneeling by the body of Becket.*]

¹ A tremendous thunderstorm actually
broke over the Cathedral as the murderers
were leaving it.



'Get the Count to give me his falcon
And that will make me well'

THE FALCON

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE COUNT FEDERIGO DEGLI ALBERIGHI.
FILIPPO, *the Count's foster-brother.*
THE LADY GIOVANNA.
ELISABETTA, *the Count's nurse.*

THE FALCON

SCENE. — AN ITALIAN COTTAGE,
CASTLE AND MOUNTAINS SEEN
THROUGH WINDOW

ELISABETTA *discovered seated on stool
in window, darning. The Count
with Falcon on his hand comes down
through the door at back. A with-
ered wreath on the wall.*

Elisabetta. So, my lord, the Lady
Giovanna, who hath been away so
long, came back last night with her
son to the castle.

Count. Hear that, my bird ! Art thou
not jealous of her ?
My princess of the cloud, my plumed
purveyor,
My far-eyed queen of the winds —
thou that canst soar
Beyond the morning lark, and, how-
soe'er
Thy quarry wind and wheel, swoop
down upon him
Eagle-like, lightning-like — strike,
make his feathers
Glance in mid heaven.

[*Crosses to chair.*
I would thou hadst a mate !

Thy breed will die with thee, and mine
with me;

I am as lone and loveless as thyself.

[Sits in chair.

Giovanna here! Ay, ruffle thyself —
be jealous!

Thou shouldst be jealous of her. Tho'
I bred thee

The full-train'd marvel of all falconry,
And love thee and thou me, yet if Gio-
vanna

Be here again — No, no! Buss me, my
bird!

The stately widow has no heart for me.
Thou art the last friend left me upon
earth —

No, no again to that! [Rises and turns.

My good old nurse,
I had forgotten thou wast sitting
there.

Elisabetta. Ay, and forgotten thy
foster-brother too.

Count. Bird-babble for my falcon!
Let it pass.

What art thou doing there?

Elisabetta. Darning, your lordship.
We cannot flaunt it in new feathers
now.

Nay, if we will buy diamond neck-
laces

To please our lady, we must darn, my
lord.

This old thing here (points to necklace
round her neck), they are but
blue beads — my Piero,

God rest his honest soul, he bought
'em for me,

Ay, but he knew I meant to marry
him.

How couldst thou do it, my son?
How couldst thou do it?

Count. She saw it at a dance, upon
a neck

Less lovely than her own, and long'd
for it.

Elisabetta. She told thee as much?

Count. No, no — a friend of hers.

Elisabetta. Shame on her that she
took it at thy hands,
She rich enough to have bought it for
herself!

Count. She would have robb'd me
then of a great pleasure.

Elisabetta. But hath she yet re-
turn'd thy love?

Count. Not yet!

Elisabetta. She should return thy
necklace then.

Count. Ay, if
She knew the giver; but I bound the
seller

To silence, and I left it privily
At Florence, in her palace.

Elisabetta. And sold thine own
To buy it for her. She not know?
She knows

There's none such other —

Count. Madman anywhere.
Speak freely, tho' to call a madman
mad

Will hardly help to make him sane
again.

Enter FILIPPO.

Filippo. Ah, the women, the wo-
men! Ah, Monna Giovanna, you here
again! you that have the face of an
angel and the heart of a — that's too
positive! You that have a score of
lovers and have not a heart for any of
them — that's positive-negative: you
that have not the head of a toad, and
not a heart like the jewel in it — that's
too negative; you that have a cheek
like a peach and a heart like the stone
in it — that's positive again — that's
better!

Elisabetta. Sh — sh — Filippo!

Filippo (turns half round). Here
has our master been a-glorifying and
a-velveting and a-silking himself, and
a-peacocking and a-spreading to catch
her eye for a dozen year, till he has n't
an eye left in his own tail to flourish
among the peahens, and all along o'
you, Monna Giovanna, all along o' you!

Elisabetta. Sh — sh — Filippo!
Can't you hear that you are saying be-
hind his back what you see you are
saying afore his face?

Count. Let him — he never spares
me to my face!

Filippo. No, my lord, I never spare
your lordship to your lordship's face,
nor behind your lordship's back, nor
to right, nor to left, nor to round about
and back to your lordship's face again,
for I'm honest, your lordship.

Count. Come, come, Filippo, what
is there in the larder?

[Elisabetta crosses to fireplace and
puts on wood.

Filippo. Shelves and hooks, shelves and hooks, and when I see the shelves I am like to hang myself on the hooks.

Count. No bread?

Filippo. Half a breakfast for a rat!

Count. Milk?

Filippo. Three laps for a cat! 90

Count. Cheese?

Filippo. A supper for twelve mites.

Count. Eggs?

Filippo. One, but addled.

Count. No bird?

Filippo. Half a tit and a hern's bill.

Count. Let be thy jokes and thy jerks, man! Anything or nothing? 99

Filippo. Well, my lord, if all-but-nothing be anything, and one plate of dried prunes be all-but-nothing, then there is anything in your lordship's larder at your lordship's service, if your lordship care to call for it.

Count. Good mother, happy was the prodigal son,

For he return'd to the rich father; I
But add my poverty to thine. And
all

Thro' following of my fancy. Pray
thee make

Thy slender meal out of those scraps
and shreds 110

Filippo spoke of. As for him and
me,

There sprouts a salad in the garden
still.

(*To the Falcon.*) Why didst thou miss
thy quarry yester-even?

To-day, my beauty, thou must dash us
down

Our dinner from the skies. Away,
Filippo! 115

[*Exit, followed by Filippo.*]

Elisabetta. I knew it would come to this. She has beggared him. I always knew it would come to this! (*Goes up to table as if to resume darning, and looks out of window.*) Why, as I live, there is Monna Giovanna coming down the hill from the castle. Stops and stares at our cottage. Ay, ay! stare at it: it's all you have left us. Shame on you! *She* beautiful! sleek as a miller's mouse! Meal enough, meat enough, well fed; but beautiful — bah! Nay, see, why she turns down the path through our little vineyard,

and I sneezed three times this morning. Coming to visit my lord, for the first time in her life too! Why, bless the saints! I'll be bound to confess her love to him at last. I forgive her, I forgive her! I knew it would come to this — I always knew it must come to this! (*Goes up to door during latter part of speech, and opens it.*) Come in, madonna, come in. (*Retires to front of table and curtsseys as the LADY GIOVANNA enters, then moves chair towards the hearth.*) Nay, let me place this chair for your ladyship. 144

[*Lady Giovanna moves slowly down stage, then crosses to chair, looking about her, bows as she sees the Madonna over fireplace, then sits in chair.*]

Lady Giovanna. Can I speak with the Count? 146

Elisabetta. Ay, my lady, but won't you speak with the old woman first, and tell her all about it and make her happy? for I've been on my knees every day for these half-dozen years in hope that the saints would send us this blessed morning; and he always took you so kindly, he always took the world so kindly. When he was a little one, and I put the bitters on my breast to wean him, he made a wry mouth at it, but he took it so kindly, and your ladyship has given him bitters enough in this world, and he never made a wry mouth at you, he always took you so kindly — which is more than I did, my lady, more than I did — and he so handsome — and bless your sweet face, you look as beautiful this morning as the very Madonna her own self — and better late than never — but come when they will — then or now — it's all for the best, come when they will — they are made by the blessed saints — these marriages. 171

[*Raises her hands.*]
Lady Giovanna. Marriages? I shall never marry again!

Elisabetta (*rises and turns*). Shame on her then!

Lady Giovanna. Where is the Count?

Elisabetta. Just gone
To fly his falcon.

Lady Giovanna. Call him back and say

I come to breakfast with him.

Elisabetta. Holy mother !
To breakfast ! O sweet saints ! one
plate of prunes !

Well, madam, I will give your mes-
sage to him. [*Exit.*]

Lady Giovanna. His falcon, and I
come to ask for his falcon, 180
The pleasure of his eyes — boast of his
hand —

Pride of his heart — the solace of his
hours —

His one companion here — nay, I have
heard

That, thro' his late magnificence of
living

And this last costly gift to mine own
self, [*Shows diamond necklace.*]

He hath become so beggar'd that his
falcon

Even wins his dinner for him in the
field.

That must be talk, not truth, but,
truth or talk,

How can I ask for his falcon ?

[*Rises and moves as she speaks.*]

O my sick boy !

My daily fading Florio, it is thou 190
Hath set me this hard task, for when
I say,

What can I do — what can I get for
thee ?

He answers, 'Get the Count to give
me his falcon,

And that will make me well.' Yet if
I ask,

He loves me, and he knows I know he
loves me !

Will he not pray me to return his
love —

To marry him ? — (*pause*) — I can
never marry him.

His grandsire struck my grandsire in
a brawl

At Florence, and my grandsire stabb'd
him there.

The feud between our houses is the
bar 200

I cannot cross ; I dare not brave my
brother,

Break with my kin. My brother hates
him, scorns

The noblest-natured man alive, and
I —

Who have that reverence for him that
I scarce

Dare beg him to receive his diamonds
back —

How can I, dare I, ask him for his fal-
con ?

[*Puts diamonds in her casket.*
Re-enter COUNT and FILIPPO. COUNT
turns to FILIPPO.

Count. Do what I said ; I cannot do
it myself.

Filippo. Why then, my lord, we are
pauper'd out and out.

Count. Do what I said !

[*Advances and bows low.*]

Welcome to this poor cottage, my dear
lady. 210

Lady Giovanna. And welcome turns
a cottage to a palace.

Count. 'T is long since we have met !

Lady Giovanna. To make amends
I come this day to break my fast with
you.

Count. I am much honor'd — yes —
[*Turns to Filippo.*]

Do what I told thee. Must I do it
myself ?

Filippo. I will, I will. (*Sighs.*)
Poor fellow ! [*Exit.*]

Count. Lady, you bring your light
into my cottage

Who never deign'd to shine into my
palace.

My palace wanting you was but a cot-
tage ;

My cottage, while you grace it, is a
palace. 220

Lady Giovanna. In cottage or in
palace, being still

Beyond your fortunes, you are still the
king

Of courtesy and liberality.

Count. I trust I still maintain my
courtesy ;

My liberality perforce is dead
Thro' lack of means of giving.

Lady Giovanna. Yet I come
To ask a gift.

[*Moves toward him a little.*]

Count. It will be hard, I fear,
To find one shock upon the field when
all

The harvest has been carried.

Lady Giovanna. But my boy —
(*Aside.*) No, no ! not yet — I cannot !

Count. Ay, how is he,

That bright inheritor of your eyes—
your boy? ²³¹

Lady Giovanna. Alas, my Lord
Federigo, he hath fallen
into a sickness, and it troubles me.

Count. Sick! is it so? why, when
he came last year
to see me hawking, he was well
enough;

And then I taught him all our hawk-
ing-phrases.

Lady Giovanna. O yes, and once
you let him fly your falcon.

Count. How charm'd he was! what
wonder?—A gallant boy,
A noble bird, each perfect of the breed.

Lady Giovanna (sinks in chair).
What do you rate her at?

Count. My bird? a hundred
Gold pieces once were offer'd by the
Duke. ²⁴¹

I had no heart to part with her for
money.

Lady Giovanna. No, not for money.
[Count turns away and sighs.

Wherefore do you sigh?

Count. I have lost a friend of late.

Lady Giovanna. I could sigh with
you
For fear of losing more than friend, a
son;

And if he leave me—all the rest of
life—

That wither'd wreath were of more
worth to me.

[Looking at wreath on wall.

Count. That wither'd wreath is of
more worth to me
Than all the blossom, all the leaf of
this

New-wakening year.

[Goes and takes down wreath.

Lady Giovanna. And yet I never
²⁴⁵
The land so rich in blossom as this
year.

Count (holding wreath toward her).
Was not the year when this was
gather'd richer?

Lady Giovanna. How long ago was
that?

Count. Alas, ten summers!
A lady that was beautiful as day
Sat by me at a rustic festival
With other beauties on a mountain
meadow,

And she was the most beautiful of all;
Then but fifteen, and still as beautiful.
The mountain flowers grew thickly
round about.

I made a wreath with some of these;
I ask'd ²⁶⁰

A ribbon from her hair to bind it with;
I whisper'd, Let me crown you Queen
of Beauty,

And softly placed the chaplet on her
head.

A color, which has color'd all my life,
Flush'd in her face; then I was call'd
away;

And presently all rose, and so departed.
Ah! she had thrown my chaplet on
the grass,

And there I found it.

[Lays his hands fall, holding wreath
despondingly.

Lady Giovanna (after pause). How
long since do you say?

Count. That was the very year be-
fore you married.

**Lady Giovanna.* When I was mar-
ried you were at the wars. ²⁷⁰

Count. Had she not thrown my
chaplet on the grass,
It may be I had never seen the wars.

[Replaces wreath whence he had
taken it.

Lady Giovanna. Ah, but, my lord,
there ran a rumor then

That you were kill'd in battle. I can
tell you

True tears that year were shed for you
in Florence.

Count. It might have been as well
for me. Unhappily

I was but wounded by the enemy there
And then imprison'd.

Lady Giovanna. Happily, however,
I see you quite recover'd of your
wound.

Count. No, no, not quite, madonna,
not yet, not yet. ²⁸⁰

Re-enter FILIPPO.

Filippo. My lord, a word with you.
Count. Pray, pardon me!

[Lady Giovanna crosses, and passes
behind chair and takes down
wreath; then goes to chair by
table.

Count (to Filippo). What is it,
Filippo?

Filippo. Spoons, your lordship

Count.

Spoons!

Filippo. Yes, my lord, for was n't my lady born with a golden spoon in her ladyship's mouth, and we have n't never so much as a silver one for the golden lips of her ladyship.

Count. Have we not half a score of silver spoons?

Filippo. Half o' one, my lord!

Count. How half of one? 290

Filippo. I trod upon him even now, my lord, in my hurry, and broke him.

Count. And the other nine?

Filippo. Sold! but shall I not mount with your lordship's leave to her ladyship's castle, in your lordship's and her ladyship's name, and confer with her ladyship's seneschal, and so descend again with some of her ladyship's own appurtenances? 300

Count. Why—no, man. Only see your cloth be clean.

[*Exit Filippo.*]

Lady Giovanna. Ay, ay, this faded ribbon was the mode
In Florence ten years back. What's here? a scroll
Pinned to the wreath.

My lord, you have said so much
Of this poor wreath that I was bold
enough

To take it down, if but to guess what
flowers

Had made it; and I find a written
scroll

That seems to run in rhymings. Might
I read?

Count. Ay, if you will.

Lady Giovanna. It should be if you
can.

(*Reads.*) 'Dead mountain.' Nay, for
who could trace a hand 310
So wild and staggering?

Count. This was penn'd, madonna,
Close to the grating on a winter morn
In the perpetual twilight of a prison,
When he that made it, having his right
hand

Lamed in the battle, wrote it with his
left.

Lady Giovanna. O heavens! the
very letters seem to shake
With cold, with pain perhaps, poor
prisoner! Well,

Tell me the words—or better—for I
see

There goes a musical score along with
them,

Repeat them to their music.

Count. You can touch
No chord in me that would not answer
you 321

In music.

Lady Giovanna. That is musically
said.

[*Count takes guitar.* *Lady Giovanna sits listening with wreath in her hand, and quietly removes scroll and places it on table at the end of the song.*]

Count (sings, playing guitar). 'Dead
mountain flowers, dead mountain-
meadow flowers,
Dearer than when you made your
mountain gay,

Sweeter than any violet of to-day,
Richer than all the wide world-wealth
of May,

To me, tho' all your bloom has died
away,

You bloom again, dead mountain-
meadow flowers.'

Enter ELISABETTA with cloth.

Elisabetta. A word with you, my
lord!

Count (singing). 'O mountain
flowers!' 329

Elisabetta (louder). A word, my lord!

Count (sings). 'Dead flowers!'

Elisabetta (louder). A word, my lord!

Count. I pray you pardon me again!

[*Lady Giovanna looking at wreath.*]

Count (to Elisabetta). What is it?

Elisabetta. My lord, we have but
one piece of earthen-ware to serve the
salad in to my lady, and that cracked!

Count. Why then, that flower'd bowl
my ancestor

Fetch'd from the farthest east—we
never use it

For fear of breakage—but this day
has brought

A great occasion. You can take it,
nurse! 338

Elisabetta. I did take it, my lord,
but what with my lady's coming that
had so flurried me, and what with the
fear of breaking it, I did break it, my
lord; it is broken!

Count. My one thing left of value
in the world!

No matter! see your cloth be white as snow!

Elisabetta (pointing thro' window). White? I warrant thee, my son, as the snow yonder on the very tip-top o' the mountain.

Count. And yet, to speak white truth, my good old mother, ³⁵⁰ I have seen it like the snow on the moraine.

Elisabetta. How can your lordship say so? There, my lord!

[*Lays cloth.*]

O my dear son, be not unkind to me.

And one word more.

[*Going — returns.*]

Count (touching guitar). Good! let it be but one.

Elisabetta. Hath she return'd thy love?

Count. Not yet!

Elisabetta. And will she?

Count (looking at Lady Giovanna).

I scarce believe it!

Elisabetta. Shame upon her then!

[*Exit.*]

Count (sings). 'Dead mountain flowers' —

Ah well, my nurse has broken
The thread of my dead flowers, as she
has broken

My china bowl. My memory is as
dead [*Goes and replaces guitar.*]
Strange that the words at home with
me so long ³⁶⁰

Should fly like bosom friends when
needed most.

So by your leave, if you would hear
the rest,

The writing.

Lady Giovanna (holding wreath toward him). There! my lord,
you are a poet,

And can you not imagine that the
wreath,

Set, as you say, so lightly on her
head,

Fell with her motion as she rose, and
she,

A girl, a child, then but fifteen, how-
ever

Flutter'd or flatter'd by your notice
of her,

Was yet too bashful to return for
it?

Count. Was it so indeed? was it so?
was it so? ³⁷⁰

[*Leans forward to take wreath; and touches Lady Giovanna's hand, which she withdraws hastily; he places wreath on corner of chair.*]

Lady Giovanna (with dignity). I did
not say, my lord, that it was so;
I said you might imagine it was so.

Enter FILIPPO with bowl of salad, which he places on table.

Filippo. Here's a fine salad for my
lady, for tho' we have been a soldier,
and ridden by his lordship's side, and
seen the red of the battle-field, yet are
we now drill-sergeant to his lordship's
lettuces, and profess to be great in
green things and in garden-stuff. ³⁷⁹

Lady Giovanna. I thank thee, good
Filippo.

[*Exit Filippo.*]

*Enter ELISABETTA with bird on a dish
which she places on table.*

Elisabetta (close to table). Here's a
fine fowl for my lady; I had scant
time to do him in. I hope he be not
underdone, for we be undone in the
doing of him.

Lady Giovanna. I thank you, my
good nurse. ³⁸⁰

*Filippo (re-entering with plate of
prunes).* And here are fine fruits for my
lady — prunes, my lady, from the tree
that my lord himself planted here in
the blossom of his boyhood — and so
I, Filippo, being, with your ladyship's
pardon, and as your ladyship knows,
his lordship's own foster-brother,
would commend them to your lady-
ship's most peculiar appreciation. ³⁹⁰

[*Puts plate on table.*]

Elisabetta. Filippo!

*Lady Giovanna (Count leads her to
table).* Will you not eat with
me, my lord?

Count. I cannot;
Not a morsel, not one morsel. I have
broken

My fast already. I will pledge you.
Wine!

Filippo, wine!

[*Sits near table; Filippo brings
flask, fills the Count's goblet, then
Lady Giovanna's; Elisabetta
stands at the back of Lady Gio-
vanna's chair.*]

Count. It is but thin and cold,
Not like the vintage blowing round
your castle.

We lie too deep down in the shadow
here.

Your ladyship lives higher in the sun.

[*They pledge each other and drink.*]

Lady Giovanna. If I might send
you down a flask or two

Of that same vintage? There is iron
in it.

It has been much commended as a
medicine.

I give it my sick son, and if you be
Not quite recover'd of your wound,
the wine

Might help you. None has ever told
me yet

The story of your battle and your
wound.

Filippo (coming forward). I can tell
you, my lady, I can tell you.

Elisabetta. Filippo! will you take
the word out of your master's own
mouth?

Filippo. Was it there to take? Put
it there, my lord.

Count. Giovanna, my dear lady, in
this same battle

We had been beaten — they were ten
to one.

The trumpets of the fight had echo'd
down,

I and Filippo here had done our best,
And, having passed unwounded from
the field,

Were seated sadly at a fountain side,
Our horses grazing by us, when a

troop,
Laden with booty and with a flag of
ours

Ta'en in the fight —

Filippo. Ay, but we fought for it
back,

And kill'd —

Elisabetta. Filippo!
Count. A troop of horse —

Filippo. Five hundred!
Count. Say fifty!

Filippo. And we kill'd 'em by the
score!

Elisabetta. Filippo!
Filippo. Well, well, well! I bite
my tongue.

Count. We may have left their fifty
less by five.

However, staying not to count how
many,

But anger'd at their flaunting of our
flag,

We mounted, and we dash'd into the
heart of 'em.

I wore the lady's chaplet round my
neck;

It served me for a blessed rosary.
I am sure that more than one brave
fellow owed

His death to the charm in it.

Elisabetta. Hear that, my lady!

Count. I cannot tell how long we
strove before

Our horses fell beneath us; down we
went

Crush'd, hack'd at, trampled under-
foot. The night,

As some cold-manner'd friend may
strangely do us

The truest service, had a touch of
frost

That help'd to check the flowing of
the blood.

My last sight ere I swoon'd was one
sweet face

Crown'd with the wreath. That
seem'd to come and go.

They left us there for dead!

Elisabetta. Hear that, my lady!

Filippo. Ay, and I left two fingers
there for dead. See, my lady! (*Show-
ing his hand.*)

Lady Giovanna. I see, Filippo!

Filippo. And I have small hope of
the gentleman gout in my great toe.

Lady Giovanna. And why, Filippo?

[*Smiling absently.*]

Filippo. I left him there for dead
too.

Elisabetta. She smiles at him — how
hard the woman is!

My lady, if your ladyship were not,
Too proud to look upon the garland,

you

Would find it stain'd —

Count (rising). Silence, Elisabetta!

Elisabetta. Stain'd with the blood
of the best heart that ever

Beat for one woman.

[*Points to wreath on chair.*]

Lady Giovanna (rising slowly). I
can eat no more!

Count. You have but trifled with
our homely salad,

But dallied with a single lettuce-leaf ;
Not eaten anything.

Lady Giovanna. Nay, nay, I cannot. ⁴⁶¹

You know, my lord, I told you I was troubled.

My one child Florio lying still so sick,
I bound myself, and by a solemn vow,
That I would touch no flesh till he
were well

Here, or else well in heaven, where all
is well.

[*Elisabetta clears table of bird and salad: Filippo snatches up the plate of prunes and holds them to Lady Giovanna.*

Filippo. But the prunes, my lady,
from the tree that his lordship —

Lady Giovanna. Not now, Filippo.

My lord Federigo,
Can I not speak with you once more
alone? ⁴⁷⁰

Count. You hear, Filippo? My
good fellow, go.

Filippo. But the prunes that your
lordship —

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Count. Ay, prune our company of
thine own, and go!

Elisabetta. Filippo!

Filippo (turning). Well, well! the
women! [Exit.

Count. And thou too leave us, my
dear nurse, alone. ⁴⁷⁹

Elisabetta (folding up cloth and going). And me too! Ay, the dear
nurse will leave you alone; but, for
all that, she that has eaten the yolk is
scarce like to swallow the shell.

[*Turns and curtsies stiffly to Lady Giovanna, then exit.* *Lady Giovanna takes out diamond necklace from casket.*

Lady Giovanna. I have anger'd
your good nurse; these old-
world servants

Are all but flesh and blood with those
they serve.

My lord, I have a present to return you,
And afterwards a boon to crave of
you.

Count. No, my most honor'd and
long-worshipt lady,

Poor Federigo degli Alberighi ⁴⁹⁰
Takes nothing in return from you
except

Return of his affection — can deny
Nothing to you that you require of
him.

Lady Giovanna. Then I require you
to take back your diamonds —

[*Offering necklace.*

I doubt not they are yours. No other
heart

Of such magnificence in courtesies
Beats — out of heaven. They seem'd
too rich a prize

To trust with any messenger. I came
In person to return them.

[*Count draws back.*

If the phrase

'Return' displease you, we will say —
exchange them. ⁵⁰⁰

For your — for your —

Count (takes a step toward her and then back). For mine — and
what of mine?

Lady Giovanna. Well, shall we say
this wreath and your sweet
rhymes?

Count. But have you ever worn
my diamonds?

Lady Giovanna. No!

For that would seem accepting of your
love.

I cannot brave my brother — but be
sure

That I shall never marry again, my
lord!

Count. Sure?

Lady Giovanna. Yes!

Count. Is this your brother's order?

Lady Giovanna. No!

For he would marry me to the richest
man

In Florence; but I think you know
the saying —

'Better a man without riches, than
riches without a man.' ⁵¹⁰

Count. A noble saying — and acted
on would yield

A nobler breed of men and women.
Lady,

I find you a shrewd bargainer. The
wreath

That once you wore outvalues twenty-
fold

The diamonds that you never deign'd
to wear.

But lay them there for a moment!

[*Points to table.* *Lady Giovanna places necklace on table.*

And be you
Gracious enough to let me know the
boon

By granting which, if aught be mine
to grant,

I should be made more happy than I
hoped

Ever to be again.

Lady Giovanna. Then keep your
wreath, ⁵²⁰

But you will find me a shrewd bargainer still.

I cannot keep your diamonds, for the
gift

I ask for, to my mind and at this present

Outvalues all the jewels upon earth.

Count. It should be love that thus
outvalues all.

You speak like love, and yet you love
me not.

I have nothing in this world but love
for you.

Lady Giovanna. Love? It is love,
love for my dying boy,

Moves me to ask it of you.

Count. What? my time?
Is it my time? Well, I can give my
time ⁵³⁰

To him that is a part of you, your
son.

Shall I return to the castle with you?
Shall I

Sit by him, read to him, tell him my
tales,

Sing him my songs? You know that
I can touch

The gittern to some purpose.

Lady Giovanna. No, not that!
I thank you heartily for that—and
you,

I doubt not from your nobleness of
nature,

Will pardon me for asking what I ask.

Count. Giovanna, dear Giovanna,
I that once

The wildest of the random youth of
Florence ⁵⁴⁰

Before I saw you—all my nobleness
Of nature, as you deign to call it,
draws

From you, and from my constancy to
you.

No more, but speak.

Lady Giovanna. I will. You know
sick people,

More specially sick children, have
strange fancies,

Strange longings; and to thwart them
in their mood

May work them grievous harm at
times, may even

Hasten their end. I would you had a
son!

It might be easier then for you to
make

Allowance for a mother—her—who
comes ⁵⁵⁰

To rob you of your one delight on
earth.

How often has my sick boy yearn'd
for this!

I have put him off as often; but to-
day

I dared not—so much weaker, so
much worse

For last day's journey. I was weep-
ing for him;

He gave me his hand: 'I should be
well again

If the good Count would give me—'

Count. Give me—

Lady Giovanna. 'His falcon.'

Count (starts back). My falcon!

Lady Giovanna. Yes, your falcon,
Federigo!

Count. Alas, I cannot!

Lady Giovanna. Cannot? Even so!

I fear'd as much. O this unhappy
world! ⁵⁶¹

How shall I break it to him? how
shall I tell him?

The boy may die; more blessed were
the rags

Of some pale beggar-woman seeking
alms

For her sick son, if he were like to
live,

Than all my childless wealth, if mine
must die.

I was to blame—the love you said
you bore me—

My lord, we thank you for your enter-
tainment,

[With a stately curtsey.

And so return—Heaven help him!—
to our son. [Turns.

Count (rushes forward). Stay, stay,
I am most unlucky, most un-
happy! ⁵⁷⁰

You never had look'd in on me be-
fore,

And when you came and dipt your
sovereign head
Thro' these low doors, you ask'd to
eat with me.

I had but emptiness to set before
you,
No, not a draught of milk, no, not an
egg,
Nothing but my brave bird, my noble
falcon,

My comrade of the house, and of the
field.

She had to die for it—she died for
you.

Perhaps I thought with those of old,
the nobler

The victim was, the more acceptable
Might be the sacrifice. I fear you
scarce

Will thank me for your entertainment
now.

Lady Giovanna (returning). I bear
with him no longer.

Count. No, madonna!
And he will have to bear with it as he
may.

Lady Giovanna. I break with him
for ever!

Count. Yes, Giovanna,
But he will keep his love to you for
ever!

Lady Giovanna. You? you? not
you! My brother! my hard brother!

O Federigo, Federigo, I love you!
Spite of ten thousand brothers, Federigo!

Count (impetuously). Why, then the
dying of my noble bird

Hath served me better than her living
— then

[*Takes diamonds from table.*
These diamonds are both yours and
mine—have won

Their value again—beyond all mar-
kets—there,

I lay them for the first time round your
neck.

[*Lays necklace round her neck.*
And then this chaplet—No more
feuds, but peace,

Peace and conciliation! I will make
Your brother love me. See, I tear
away

The leaves were darken'd by the bat-
tle—

[*Pulls leaves off and throws them
down.*

— crown you
Again with the same crown my Queen
of Beauty.

[*Places wreath on her head.*
Rise—I could almost think that the
dread garland

Will break once more into the living
blossom.

Nay, nay, I pray you rise.

[*Raises her with both hands.*
We two together

Will help to heal your son—your son
and mine—

We shall do it—we shall do it!

[*Embraces her.*
The purpose of my being is accom-
plish'd,

And I am happy!

Lady Giovanna. And I too, Fede-
rigo.

THE CUP

A TRAGEDY

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

GALATIANS	SYNORIX, an ex-Tetrarch.	PHOEBE.
	SINNATUS, a Tetrarch.	CAMMA, wife of Sinnatus, afterwards
	Attendant.	Priestess in the Temple of Artemis.
ROMANS	Boy.	Maid.
	ANTONIUS, a Roman General.	Nobleman.
	PUBLIUS.	Messenger.

THE CUP

ACT I

SCENE I. — DISTANT VIEW OF A CITY OF GALATIA.

As the curtain rises, Priestesses are heard singing in the Temple. Boy discovered on a pathway among Rocks, picking grapes. A party of Roman Soldiers, guarding a prisoner in chains, come down the pathway and exeunt.

Enter SYNORIX (looking round). Singing ceases.

Synorix. Pine, beech and plane, oak, walnut, apricot,

Vine, cypress, poplar, myrtle, bowering-in

The city where she dwells. She past me here

Three years ago when I was flying from

My tetrarchy to Rome. I almost touch'd her —

A maiden slowly moving on to music Among her maidens to this temple —

O Gods!

She is my fate — else wherefore has my fate

Brought me again to her own city? — married

Since — married Sinnatus, the tetrarch here —

But if he be conspirator, Rome will chain

Or slay him. I may trust to gain her then

When I shall have my tetrarchy restored

By Rome, our mistress, grateful that I show'd her

The weakness and the dissonance of our clans,

And how to crush them easily. Wretched race!

And once I wish'd to scourge them to the bones.

But in this narrow breathing-time of life

Is vengeance for its own sake worth the while,

If once our ends are gain'd? and now this cup —

I never felt such passion for a woman.

[Brings out a cup and scroll from under his cloak.]

What have I written to her?

[Reading the scroll.]

'To the admired Camma, wife of Sinnatus the Tetrarch, one who years ago, himself an adorer of our great goddess Artemis, beheld you afar off worshipping in her temple, and loved you for it, sends you this cup rescued from the burning of one of her shrines in a city thro' which he past with the Roman army: it is the cup we use in our marriages. Receive it from one who cannot at present write himself other than

'A GALATIAN SERVING BY FORCE IN THE ROMAN LEGION.'

[Turns and looks up to Boy.]

Boy, dost thou know the house of Sinnatus?

Boy. These grapes are for the house of Sinnatus —

Close to the temple.

Synorix.

Yonder?

Boy.

Yes.

Synorix (aside).

That I

With all my range of women should
yet shun

To meet her face to face at once! My
boy,

[*Boy comes down rocks to him.*
Take thou this letter and this cup to
Camma,

The wife of Sinnatus.

Boy. Going or gone to-day
To hunt with Sinnatus.

Synorix. That matters not.
Take thou this cup and leave it at her
doors.

[*Gives the cup and scroll to the Boy.*

Boy. I will, my lord.

[*Takes his basket of grapes and exit.*

Enter ANTONIUS.

*Antoni*us (*meeting the Boy as he goes
out*).

Why, whither runs the boy?
Is that the cup you rescued from the
fire?

Synorix. I send it to the wife of
Sinnatus,

One half besotted in religious rites.

You come here with your soldiers to
enforce

The long-withholden tribute; you
suspect

This Sinnatus of playing patriotism,
Which in your sense is treason. You
have yet

No proof against him. Now this pious
cup

Is passport to their house, and open
arms

To him who gave it; and once there
I warrant

I worm thro' all their windings.

*Antoni*us. If you prosper,
Our Senate, wearied of their te-
trarchies,

Their quarrels with themselves, their
spites at Rome,

Is like enough to cancel them, and
throne

One king above them all, who shall be
true

To the Roman; and from what I heard
in Rome,

This tributary crown may fall to
you.

Synorix. The king, the crown! their
talk in Rome? is it so?

[*Antoni*us *nods*.

Well — I shall serve Galatia taking it,

And save her from herself, and be to
Rome

More faithful than a Roman.

[*Turns and sees Camma coming.*

Stand aside,

Stand aside; here she comes!

[*Watching Camma as she enters
with her Maid.*

Camma (*to Maid*). Where is he, girl?

Maid. You know the waterfall
That in the summer keeps the moun-
tain side,

But after rain o'erleaps a jutting rock
And shoots three hundred feet.

Camma. The stag is there?

Maid. Seen in the thicket at the
bottom there

But yester-even.

Camma. Good then, we will climb
The mountain opposite and watch the
chase.

[*They descend the rocks and exeunt.*

Synorix (*watching her*). (*Aside*). The
bust of Juno, and the brows and
eyes

Of Venus; face and form unmatcha-
ble!

*Antoni*us. Why do you look at her
so lingeringly?

Synorix. To see if years have
changed her.

*Antoni*us (*sarcastically*). Love her,
do you?

Synorix. I envied Sinnatus when he
married her.

*Antoni*us. She knows it? Ha!

Synorix. She — no, nor even my
face.

*Antoni*us. Nor Sinnatus either?

Synorix. No, nor Sinnatus.

*Antoni*us. Hot-blooded! I have
heard them say in Rome,
That your own people cast you from
their bounds

For some unprincely violence to a
woman,

As Rome did Tarquin.

Synorix. Well, if this were so
I here return like Tarquin — for a
crown.

*Antoni*us. And may be foil'd like
Tarquin, if you follow

Not the dry light of Rome's straight-
going policy,

But the fool-fire of love or lust, which
well

May make you lose yourself, may even drown you

In the good regard of Rome.

Synorix. Tut—fear me not; I ever had my victories among women. I am most true to Rome.

Antonius (aside). I hate the man! What filthy tools our Senate works with! Still

I must obey them. (*Aloud.*) Fare you well.

[*Going.*]

Synorix. Farewell!

Antonius (stopping). A moment! If you track this Sinnatus

In any treason, I give you here an order

[*Produces a paper.*]

To seize upon him. Let me sign it. (*Signs it.*) There—

‘Antonius, leader of the Roman Legion.’

100

[*Hands the paper to Synorix. Goes up pathway and exit.*]

Synorix. Woman again!—but I am wiser now.

No rushing on the game—the net,—the net.

[*Shouts of ‘Sinnatus! Sinnatus!’ Then horn.*]

[*Looking off stage.*] He comes, a rough, bluff, simple-looking fellow.

If we may judge the kernel by the husk,

Not one to keep a woman’s fealty when Assailed by Craft and Love. I’ll join with him;

I may reap something from him—come upon her

Again, perhaps, to-day—her. Who are with him?

I see no face that knows me. Shall I risk it?

I am a Roman now, they dare not touch me.

110

I will.

Enter SINNATUS, HUNSMEN and hounds.

Fair sir, a happy day to you! You reck but little of the Roman here, While you can take your pastime in the woods.

Sinnatus. Ay, ay, why not? What would you with me, man?

Synorix. I am a lifelong lover of the chase,

And tho’ a stranger fain would be allowed

To join the hunt.

Sinnatus. Your name?

Synorix. Strato, my name.

Sinnatus. No Roman name?

Synorix. A Greek, my lord; you know

That we Galatians are both Greek and Gaul.

[*Shouts and horns in the distance.*]

Sinnatus. Hillo, the stag! (*To Synorix.*) What, you are all unfurnish’d?

120

Give him a bow and arrows—follow—follow.

[*Exit, followed by Huntsmen.*]

Synorix. Slowly but surely—till I see my way.

It is the one step in the dark beyond Our expectation, that amazes us.

[*Distant shouts and horns.*]

Hillo! Hillo!

[*Exit Synorix. Shouts and horns.*]

SCENE II

A ROOM IN THE TETRARCH’S HOUSE

Frescoed figures on the walls. Evening.

Moonlight outside. A couch with cushions on it. A small table with a flagon of wine, cups, plate of grapes, etc., also the cup of Scene I. A chair with drapery on it.

CAMMA enters, and opens curtains of window.

Camma. No Sinnatus yet—and there the rising moon.

[*Takes up a cithern and sits on couch. Plays and sings.*]

Moon on the field and the foam,
Moon on the waste and the wold,
Moon bring him home, bring him home,
Safe from the dark and the cold,
Home, sweet moon, bring him home,
Home with the flock to the fold—
Safe from the wolf—

[*Listening.*] Is he coming? I thought I heard

A footstep. No, not yet. They say that Rome

10

Sprang from a wolf. I fear my dear lord mixt

With some conspiracy against the wolf.

This mountain shepherd never dream'd of Rome. [*Sings.*]

Safe from the wolf to the fold —

And that great break of precipice that runs

Thro' all the wood, where twenty years ago

Huntsman and hound and deer were all neck-broken!

Nay, here he comes.

Enter SINNATUS followed by SYNORIX.

Sinnatus (angrily). I tell thee, my good fellow,

My arrow struck the stag.

Synorix. But was it so?

Nay, you were further off; besides the wind 20

Went with *my* arrow.

Sinnatus. I am sure *I* struck him.

Synorix. And I am just as sure, my lord, *I* struck him.

(*Aside.*) And I may strike your game when you are gone.

Camma. Come, come, we will not quarrel about the stag.

I have had a weary day in watching you.

Yours must have been a wearier. Sit and eat,

And take a hunter's vengeance on the meats.

Sinnatus. No, no — we have eaten — we are heated. Wine!

Camma. Who is our guest?

Sinnatus. Strato he calls himself.

[*Camma offers wine to Synorix, while Sinnatus helps himself.*]

Sinnatus. I pledge you, Strato.

[*Drinks.*]

Synorix. And I you, my lord.

[*Drinks.*]

Sinnatus (seeing the cup sent to Camma). What's here?

Camma. A strange gift sent to me to-day. 31

A sacred cup saved from a blazing shrine

Of our great Goddess, in some city where

Antonius past. I had believed that Rome

Made war upon the peoples, not the Gods.

Synorix. Most like the city rose against Antonius,

Whereon he fired it, and the sacred shrine 37

By chance was burnt along with it.

Sinnatus. Had you then No message with the cup?

Camma. Why, yes, see here. [*Gives him the scroll.*]

Sinnatus (reads). 'To the admired Camma, — beheld you afar off — loved you — sends you this cup — the cup we use in our marriages — cannot at present write himself other than

'A GALATIAN SERVING BY FORCE IN 'THE ROMAN LEGION.'

Serving by force! Were there no boughs to hang on,

Rivers to drown in? Serve by force? No force

Could make me serve by force.

Synorix. How then, my lord? The Roman is encampt without your city — 50

The force of Rome a thousand-fold our own.

Must all Galatia hang or drown herself?

And you a prince and tetrarch in this province —

Sinnatus. Province!

Synorix. Well, well, they call it so in Rome.

Sinnatus (angrily). Province!

Synorix. A noble anger! but Antonius

To-morrow will demand your tribute — you,

Can you make war? Have you alliances?

Bithynia, Pontus, Paphlagonia?

We have had our leagues of old with Eastern kings.

There is my hand — if such a league there be. 60

What will you do?

Sinnatus. Not set myself abroad And run my mind out to a random guest

Who join'd me in the hunt. You saw my hounds

True to the scent; and we have two-legg'd dogs

Among us who can smell a true occasion,

And when to bark and how.

Synorix. My good Lord Sinnatus, I once was at the hunting of a lion.
 Roused by the clamor of the chase he woke,
 Came to the front of the wood — his monarch mane
 Bristled about his quick ears — he stood there 70
 Staring upon the hunter. A score of dogs
 Gnaw'd at his ankles; at the last he felt
 The trouble of his feet, put forth one paw,
 Slew four, and knew it not, and so remain'd
 Staring upon the hunter. And this Rome
 Will crush you if you wrestle with her; then,
 Save for some slight report in her own Senate,
 Scarce know what she has done.
 (*Aside.*) Would I could move him, Provoke him any way! (*Aloud.*) The Lady Camma,
 Wise I am sure as she is beautiful, 80
 Will close with me that to submit at once
 Is better than a wholly hopeless war, Our gallant citizens murder'd all in vain,
 Son, husband, brother gash'd to death in vain,
 And the small state more cruelly trampled on
 Than had she never moved.
Camma. Sir, I had once A boy who died a babe; but were he living
 And grown to man and Sinnatus will'd it, I
 Would set him in the front rank of the fight
 With scarce a pang. (*Rises.*) Sir, if a state submit 90
 At once, she may be blotted out at once
 And swallow'd in the conqueror's chronicle.
 Whereas in wars of freedom and defence
 The glory and grief of battle won or lost
 Bolders a race together — yea — tho' they fail,

The names of those who fought and fell are like
 A bank'd-up fire that flashes out again
 From century to century, and at last
 May lead them on to victory — I hope so — 99
 Like phantoms of the Gods.
Sinnatus. Well spoken, wife.
Synorix (*bowing*). Madam, so well I yield.
Sinnatus. I should not wonder
 If Synorix, who has dwelt three years in Rome
 And wrought his worst against his native land,
 Returns with this Antonius.
Synorix. What is Synorix?
Sinnatus. Galatian, and not know? This Synorix
 Was tetrarch here, and tyrant also — did
 Dishonor to our wives.
Synorix. Perhaps you judge him
 With feeble charity; being as you tell me
 Tetrarch, there might be willing wives enough
 To feel dishonor honor.
Camma. Do not say so.
 I know of no such wives in all Galatia. 111
 There may be courtesans for aught I know
 Whose life is one dishonor.
Enter ATTENDANT.
Attendant (*aside*). My lord, the men!
Sinnatus (*aside*). Our anti-Roman faction?
Attendant (*aside*). Ay, my lord.
Synorix (*overhearing*). (*Aside.*) I have enough — their anti-Roman faction.
Sinnatus (*aloud*). Some friends of mine would speak with me without.
 You, Strato, make good cheer till I return. [*Exit.*]
Synorix. I have much to say, no time to say it in.
 First, lady, know myself am that Galatian
 Who sent the cup.
Camma. I thank you from my heart.
Synorix. Then that I serve with Rome to serve Galatia. 121

That is my secret; keep it, or you
sell me
To torment and to death.

[*Coming closer.*

For your ear only —
I love you — for your love to the
great Goddess.

The Romans sent me here a spy upon
you,

To draw you and your husband to
your doom.

I'd sooner die than do it.

[*Takes out paper given him by Antonius.*

This paper sign'd
Antonius — will you take it, read it?
there!

Camma (reads). 'You are to seize
on Sinnatus, — if —'

Synorix (snatches paper). No more.
What follows is for no wife's eyes. O

Camma,¹³⁰
Rome has a glimpse of this conspiracy;
Rome never yet hath spar'd conspirator.

Horrible! flaying, scourging, crucifying —

Camma. I am tender enough. Why
do you practise on me?

Synorix. Why should I practise on
you? How you wrong me!
I am sure of being every way malign'd.
And if you should betray me to your
husband —

Camma. Will you betray him by
this order?

Synorix. See,
I tear it all to pieces, never dream'd
Of acting on it. [*Tears the paper.*

Camma. I owe you thanks for ever.

Synorix. Hath Sinnatus never told
you of this plot?¹⁴¹

Camma. What plot?

Synorix. A child's sand-castle on
the beach

For the next wave, — all seen, — all
calculated,

All known by Rome. No chance for
Sinnatus.

Camma. Why said you not as
much to my brave Sinnatus?

Synorix. Brave — ay — too brave,
too over-confident,
Too like to ruin himself, and you, and
me!

Who else, with this black thunderbolt
of Rome

Above him, would have chased the
stag to-day

In the full face of all the Roman camp?

A miracle that they let him home
again,¹⁵¹

Not caught, maim'd, blinded him.

[*Camma shudders.*
(*Aside.*) I have made her tremble.

(*Aloud.*) I know they mean to tor-
ture him to death.

I dare not tell him how I came to
know it;

I durst not trust him with — my serv-
ing Rome

To serve Galatia; you heard him on
the letter.

Not say as much? I all but said as
much.

I am sure I told him that his plot was
folly.

I say it to you — you are wiser —
Rome knows all,

But you know not the savagery of
Rome.¹⁶⁰

Camma. O! — have you power
with Rome? use it for him!

Synorix. Alas! I have no such
power with Rome. All that

Lies with Antonius.

[*As if struck by a sudden thought.*
Comes over to her.

He will pass to-morrow
In the gray dawn before the Temple
doors.

You have beauty, — O, great beauty,
— and Antonius,

So gracious toward women, never yet
Flung back a woman's prayer. Plead

to him,
I am sure you will prevail.

Camma. Still — I should tell
My husband.

Synorix. Will he let you plead for
him

To a Roman?

Camma. I fear not.

Synorix. Then do not tell him.
Or tell him, if you will, when you re-
turn,¹⁷¹

When you have charm'd our general
into mercy,

And all is safe again. O dearest lady,
[*Murmurs of 'Synorix! Synorix!'*
heard outside.

Think, — torture, — death, — and come.

Camma. I will, I will.

And I will not betray you.

Synorix (*aside, as Sinnatus enters*).
Stand apart.

Enter SINNATUS and ATTENDANT.

Sinnatus. Thou art that Synbrix!
One whom thou hast wrong'd
Without there knew thee with Ant-
ninus.

They howl for thee, to rend thee head
from limb.

Synorix. I am much malign'd. I
thought to serve Galatia.

Sinnatus. Serve thyself first, villain!
They shall not harm

My guest within my house. There!
(*points to door*) there! this door
Opens upon the forest! Out, begone!
Henceforth I am thy mortal enemy.

Synorix. However, I thank thee
(*draws his sword*); thou hast
saved my life. [*Exit.*]

Sinnatus (*to Attendant*). Return and
tell them Synorix is not here.

[*Exit Attendant.*]

What did that villain Synorix say to
you?

Camma. Is he — that — Synorix?

Sinnatus. Wherefore should you
doubt it?

One of the men there knew him.

Camma. Only one,
And he perhaps mistaken in the face.

Sinnatus. Come, come, could he
deny it? What did he say?

Camma. What should he say?

Sinnatus. What should he say, my
wife!

He should say this, that being tetrarch
once

His own true people cast him from
their doors

Like a base coin.

Camma. Not kindly to them?

Sinnatus. Kindly?

O, the most kindly prince in all the
world!

Would clap his honest citizens on the
back,

Bandy their own rude jests with them,
be curious

About the welfare of their babes, their
wives,

O, ay — their wives — their wives!
What should he say?

He should say nothing to my wife
if I

Were by to throttle him! He steep'd
himself

In all the lust of Rome. How should
you guess

What manner of beast it is?

Camma. Yet he seem'd kindly,
And said he loathed the cruelties that
Rome

Wrought on her vassals.

Sinnatus. Did he, honest man?

Camma. And you, that seldom
brook the stranger here,

Have let him hunt the stag with you
to-day.

Sinnatus. I warrant you now, he
said he struck the stag.

Camma. Why, no, he never touch'd
upon the stag.

Sinnatus. Why, so I said, my arrow.
Well, to sleep.

[*Goes to close door.*]

Camma. Nay, close not yet the door
upon a night

That looks half day.

Sinnatus. True; and my friends
may spy him

And slay him as he runs.

Camma. He is gone already.

O, look, — yon grove upon the moun-
tain, — white

In the sweet moon as with a lovelier
snow!

But what a blot of blackness under-
neath!

Sinnatus, you remember — yea, you
must,

That there three years ago — the vast
vine-bowers

Ran to the summit of the trees, and
dropt

Their streamers earthward, which a
breeze of May

Took ever and anon, and open'd out
The purple zone of hill and heaven.

There

You told your love; and like the
swaying vines —

Yea, — with our eyes, — our hearts
our prophet hopes

Let in the happy distance, and that all
But cloudless heaven which we have

found together

In our three married years! You kiss'd me there

For the first time. Sinnatus, kiss me now.

Sinnatus. First kiss. (*Kisses her.*) There, then. You talk almost as if it

Might be the last.

Camma. Will you not eat a little?

Sinnatus. No, no, we found a goat-herd's hut, and shared ²³¹

His fruits and milk. Liar! You will believe

Now that he never struck the stag — a brave one

Which you shall see to-morrow.

Camma. I rise to-morrow

In the gray dawn, and take this holy cup

To lodge it in the shrine of Artemis.

Sinnatus. Good!

Camma. If I be not back in half an hour,

Come after me.

Sinnatus. What! is there danger?

Camma. Nay,

None that I know; 't is but a step from here

To the Temple.

Sinnatus. All my brain is full of sleep. ²⁴⁰

Wake me before you go, I'll after you —

After me now! [*Closes door and exit.*]

Camma (*drawing curtains*). Your shadow. Synorix —

His face was not malignant, and he said

That men malign'd him. Shall I go? Shall I go?

Death, torture —

'He never yet flung back a woman's prayer' —

I go, but I will have my dagger with me. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III

SAME AS SCENE I. DAWN

Music and Singing in the Temple.

Enter SYNORIX watchfully, after him

PUBLIUS and SOLDIERS.

Synorix. Publius!

Publius. Here!

Synorix. Do you remember what I told you?

Publius. When you cry, 'Rome, Rome,' to seize

On whomsoever may be talking with you,

Or man, or woman, as traitors unto Rome.

Synorix. Right. Back again. How many of you are there?

Publius. Some half a score.

[*Exeunt Soldiers and Publius.*]

Synorix. I have my guard about me.

I need not fear the crowd that hunted me

Across the woods, last night. I hardly gain'd

The camp at midnight. Will she come to me

Now that she knows me Synorix? Not if Sinnatus ¹⁰

Has told her all the truth about me Well,

I cannot help the mould that I was cast in.

I fling all that upon my fate, my star. I know that I am genial, I would be

Happy, and make all others happy, so They did not thwart me. Nay, she will

not come.

Yet if she be a true and loving wife She may, perchance, to save this husband. Ay!

See, see, my white bird stepping toward the snare.

Why, now I count it all but miracle, That this brave heart of mine should

shake me so, ²¹

As helplessly as some unbearded boy's When first he meets his maiden in a bower.

Enter CAMMA (*with cup*).

The lark first takes the sunlight on his wing,

But you, twin sister of the morning star,

Forelead the sun.

Camma. Where is Antonius?

Synorix. Not here as yet. You are too early for him.

[*She crosses towards Temple.*]

Synorix. Nay, whither go you now?

Camma. To lodge this cup

Within the holy shrine of Artemis, And so return.

Synorix. To find Antonius here.

[*She goes into the Temple, he looks after her.*]

The loveliest life that ever drew the
light 31

From heaven to brood upon her, and
enrich

Earth with her shadow! I trust she
will return.

These Romans dare not violate the
Temple.

No, I must lure my game into the
camp.

A woman I could live and die for.
What!

Die for a woman, what new faith is
this?

I am not mad, not sick, not old enough
To dote on one alone. Yes, mad for
her,

Camma the stately, Camma the great-
hearted, 40

So mad, I fear some strange and evil
chance

Coming upon me, for, by the Gods I
seem

Strange to myself!

Re-enter CAMMA.

Camma. Where is Antonius?

Synorix. Where? As I said before,
you are still too early.

Camma. Too early to be here alone
with thee;

For whether men malign thy name, or
no,

It bears an evil savor among women.
Where is Antonius? (*Loud.*)

Synorix. Madam, as you know
The camp is half a league without the
city;

If you will walk with me we needs
must meet 50

Antonius coming, or at least shall find
him

There in the camp.

Camma. No, not one step with thee.
Where is Antonius? (*Louder.*)

Synorix (advancing towards her).

Then for your own sake,

Lady, I say it with all gentleness,
And for the sake of Sinnatus your hus-
band,

I must compel you.

Camma (drawing her dagger). Stay!
— too near is death.

Synorix (disarming her). Is it not
easy to disarm a woman?

*Enter SINNATUS (seizes him from behind
by the throat).*

Synorix (throttled and scarce audible).
Rome! Rome!

Sinnatus. Adulterous dog!

*Synorix (stabbing him with Camma's
dagger).* What! will you have
it?

[Camma utters a cry and runs to
Sinnatus.

Sinnatus (falls backward) I have it
in my heart — to the Temple —
fly —

For my sake — or they seize on thee.
Remember! 60

Away — farewell!

[*Dies.*

*Camma (runs up the steps into the
Temple, looking back).* Farewell,

Synorix (seeing her escape). The wo-
men of the Temple drag her in

Publius! Publius! No,
Antonius would not suffer me to break
Into the sanctuary. She hath escaped.

[*Looking down at Sinnatus.*
'Adulterous dog!' that red-faced rage
at me!

Then with one quick short stab — eter-
nal peace.

So end all passions. Then what use in
passions?

To warm the cold bonds of our dying
life

And, lest we freeze in mortal apa-
thy, 70

Employ us, heat us, quicken us, help
us, keep us

From seeing us all too near that urn,
those ashes

Which all must be. Well used, they
serve us well.

I heard a saying in Egypt, that ambi-
tion

Is like the sea wave, which the more
you drink

The more you thirst — yea — drink too
much, as men

Have done on rafts of wreck — it
drives you mad.

I will be no such wreck, am no such
gamester

As, having won the stake, would dare
the chance

Of double, or losing all. The Roman
Senate, 80

For I have always play'd into their
hands,

Means me the crown. And Camma
for my bride —

The people love her — if I win her love,
They too will cleave to me, as one with
her.

There then I rest, Rome's tributary
king.

[*Looking down on Sinnatus*
Why did I strike him? — having proof
enough

Against the man, I surely should have
left

That stroke to Rome. He saved my
life too. Did he?

It seem'd so. I have play'd the sudden
fool.

And that sets her against me — for the
moment. 90

Camma — well, well, I never found
the woman

I could not force or wheedle to my
will.

She will be glad at last to wear my
crown.

And I will make Galatia prosperous
too,

And we will chirp among our vines,
and smile

At bygone things till that (*pointing to*
Sinnatus) eternal peace.

Rome! Rome!

Enter PUBLIUS and SOLDIERS.

Twice I cried Romc. Why came ye
not before?

Publius. Why come we now? Whom
shall we seize upon?

Synorix (*pointing to the body of Sin-*
natus). The body of that dead
traitor Sinnatus. 100

Bear him away.

Music and Singing in Temple.

ACT II

SCENE. — INTERIOR OF THE TEMPLE
OF ARTEMIS

*Small gold gates on platform in front
of the veil before the colossal statue of
the Goddess, and in the centre of the
Temple a tripod altar, on which is a
lighted lamp. Lamps (lighted) sus-
pended between the pillars. Tripods,
vases, garlands of flowers, etc., about
stage. Altar at back close to Goddess,
with two cups. Solemn music. Priest-
esses decorating the Temple.*

(*The Chorus of PRIESTESSES sing as
they enter.*)

Artemis, Artemis, hear us, O Mother, hear
us, and bless us!

Artemis, thou that art life to the wind, to
the wave, to the glebe, to the fire!

Hear thy people who praise thee! O, help
us from all that oppress us!

Hear thy priestesses hymn thy glory! O,
yield them all their desire!

Priestess Phcebe, that man from
Synorix, who has been

So oft to see the priestess, waits once
more

Before the Temple.

Phcebe. We will let her know.

[*Signs to one of the Priestesses, who
goes out.*

Since Camma fled from Synorix to our
Temple,

And for her beauty, stateliness, and
power,

Was chosen priestess here, have you
not mark'd 10

Her eyes were ever on the marble
floor?

To-day they are fixt and bright — they
look straight out.

Hath she made up her mind to marry
him?

Priestess. To marry him who stabb'd
her Sinnatus!

You will not easily make me credit
that.

Phcebe. Ask her.

*Enter CAMMA as Priestess (in front of
the curtains).*

Priestess. You will not marry Syn-
orix?

Camma. My girl, I am the bride of
Death, and only

Marry the dead.

Priestess. Not Synorix then?

Camma. My girl,

At times this oracle of great Arte-
mis

Has no more power than other ora-
cles 20

To speak directly.

Phcebe. Will you speak to him,

The messenger from Synorix who
waits

Before the Temple?

Camma. Why not? Let him enter.

[*Comes forward on to step by tripod*

Enter a MESSENGER.

Messenger (kneels). Greeting and health from Synorix! More than once
 You have refused his hand. When last I saw you,
 You all but yielded. He entreats you now
 For your last answer. When he struck at Sinnatus—
 As I have many a time declared to you—
 He knew not at the moment who had fasten'd
 About his throat—he begs you to forget it
 As scarce his act—a random stroke.³⁰
 All else
 Was love for you; he prays you to believe him.
Camma. I pray him to believe—that I believe him.
Messenger. Why, that is well. You mean to marry him?
Camma. I mean to marry him—if that be well.
Messenger. This very day the Romans crown him king
 For all his faithful services to Rome. He wills you then this day to marry him,
 And so be throned together in the sight
 Of all the people, that the world may know⁴⁰
 You twain are reconciled, and no more feuds
 Disturb our peaceful vassalage to Rome.
Camma. To-day? Too sudden. I will brood upon it.
 When do they crown him?
Messenger. Even now.
Camma. And where?
Messenger. Here by your temple.
Camma. Come once more to me
 Before the crowning,—I will answer you. [*Exit Messenger.*]
Phoebe. Great Artemis! O Camma, can it be well,
 Or good, or wise, that you should clasp a hand
 Red with the sacred blood of Sinnatus?
Camma. Good! mine own dagger driven by Synorix found⁵⁰
 All good in the true heart of Sinnatus,
 But he and I are both Galatian-born;
 And tributary sovereigns, he and I

Might teach this Rome—from knowledge of our people—
 Where to lay on her tribute—heavily here
 And lightly there. Might I not live for that,
 And drown all poor self-passion in the sense
 Of public good?
Phoebe. I am sure you will not marry him.
Camma. Are you so sure? I pray you wait and see.⁶⁰
 [*Shouts (from the distance) 'Synorix! Synorix!'*]
Camma. Synorix, Synorix! So they cried Sinnatus
 Not so long since—they sicken me. The One
 Who shifts his policy suffers some thing, must
 Accuse himself, excuse himself; the Many
 Will feel no shame to give themselves the lie.
Phoebe. Most like it was the Roman soldier shouted.
Camma. Their shield-borne patriot of the morning star
 Hang'd at midday, their traitor of the dawn
 The clamor'd darling of their afternoon!
 And that same head they would have play'd at ball with⁷⁰
 And kick'd it featureless—they now would crown!
 [*Flourish of trumpets.*]
Enter a Galatian NOBLEMAN with crown on a cushion.
Noble (kneels). Greeting and health from Synorix. He sends you
 This diadem of the first Galatian Queen,
 That you may feed your fancy on the glory of it,
 And join your life this day with his, and wear it
 Beside him on his throne. He waits your answer.
Camma. Tell him there is one shadow among the shadows,
 One ghost of all the ghosts—as yet so new,
 So strange among them—such an alien there,
 So much of husband in it still—that if
 The shout of Synorix and Camma sitting

Upon one throne, should reach it, it
would rise—

HE!—HE, with that red star between
the ribs,

And my knife there—and blast the
king and me,

And blanch the crowd with horror. I
dare not, sir!

Throne him—and then the marriage
—ay, and tell him

That I accept the diadem of Galatia—

[*All are amazed.*]

Yea, that ye saw me crown myself
withal. [*Puts on the crown.*]

I wait him his crown'd queen.

Noble. So will I tell him. [*Exit.*]

Music. Two Priestesses go up the steps
before the shrine, draw the curtains
on either side (discovering the God-
dess), then open the gates and remain
on steps, one on either side, and kneel.

A priestess goes off and returns with
a veil of marriage, then assists PHÆBE
to veil CAMMA. At the same time
Priestesses enter and stand on either
side of the Temple. CAMMA and all
the Priestesses kneel, raise their hands
to the Goddess, and bow down.

[*Shouts, 'Synorix! Synorix!' All rise.*]

Camma. Fling wide the doors, and
let the new-made children

Of our imperial mother see the show.

[*Sunlight pours through the doors.*]
I have no heart to do it. (*To Phæbe.*)

Look for me!

[*Crouches. Phæbe looks out.*]

[*Shouts, 'Synorix! Synorix!'*]

Phæbe. He climbs the throne. Hot
blood, ambition, pride

So bloat and redden his face—O,
would it were

His third last apoplexy! O, bestial!
O, how unlike our goodly Sinnatus!

Camma (*on the ground*). You wrong
him surely; far as the face goes

A goodlier-looking man than Sinnatus.

Phæbe (*aside*). How dare she say it?

I could hate her for it
But that she is distracted.

[*A flourish of trumpets.*]

Camma. Is he crown'd?

Phæbe. Ay, there they crown him.

[*Crowd without shout, 'Synorix! Synorix!'*]

[*A Priestess brings a box of spices
to Camma, who throws them on
the altar-flame.*]

Camma. Rouse the dead altar-flame,
fling in the spices,

Nard, cinnamon, amomum, benzoin.

Let all the air reel into a mist of odor,
As in the midmost heart of Paradise.

Lay down the Lydian carpets for the
King.

The King should pace on purple to his
bride,

And music there to greet my lord the
King. [*Music.*]

(*To Phæbe.*) Dost thou remember
when I wedded Sinnatus?

Ay, thou wast there—whether from
maiden fears

Or reverential love for him I loved,
Or some strange second-sight, the mar-
riage-cup

Wherefrom we make libation to the
Goddess

So shook within my hand that the red
wine

Ran down the marble and lookt like
blood, like blood.

Phæbe. I do remember your first-
marriage fears.

Camma. I have no fears at this my
second marriage.

See here—I stretch my hand out—
hold it there.

How steady it is!

Phæbe. Steady enough to stab him!

Camma. O, hush! O, peace! This
violence ill becomes

The silence of our Temple. Gentle-
ness,

Low words best chime with this so-
lemnity.

*Enter a procession of Priestesses and
Children bearing garlands and golden
goblets, and strewing flowers.*

*Enter SYNORIX (as King, with gold
laurel-wreath crown and purple robes),
followed by ANTONIUS, PUBLIUS,
Noblemen, Guards, and the Populace.*

Camma. Hail, King!

Synorix. Hail, Queen!

The wheel of Fate has roll'd me to the
top.

I would that happiness were gold,
that I

Might cast my largess of it to the
crowd!

I would that every man made feast
to-day,

Beneath the shadow of our pines and
planes!

For all my truer life begins to-day.
 The past is like a travell'd land now
 sunk ¹³¹
 Below the horizon — like a barren
 shore
 That grew salt weeds, but now all
 drown'd in love
 And glittering at full tide — the boun-
 teous bays
 And havens filling with a blissful
 sea.
 Nor speak I now too mightily, being
 King
 And happy! happiest, lady, in my
 power
 To make you happy.

Camma. Yes, sir.

Synorix. Our Antonius,
 Our faithful friend of Rome, tho' Rome
 may set
 A free foot where she will, yet of his
 courtesy ¹⁴⁰
 Entreats he may be present at our
 marriage.

Camma. Let him come — a legion
 with him, if he will.

(*To Antonius.*) Welcome, my lord
 Antonius, to our Temple.

(*To Synorix.*) You on this side the
 altar. (*To Antonius.*) You on
 that.

Call first upon the Goddess, Synorix.

[*All face the Goddess. Priestesses,
 Children, Populace, and Guards
 kneel — the others remain stand-
 ing.*]

Synorix. O thou that dost inspire
 the germ with life,
 The child, a thread within the house
 of birth,
 And give him limbs, then air, and send
 him forth
 The glory of his father — thou whose
 breath
 Is balmy wind to robe our hills with
 grass, ¹⁵⁰
 And kindle all our vales with myrtle-
 blossom,
 And roll the golden oceans of our
 grain,
 And sway the long grape-bunches of
 our vines,
 And fill all hearts with fatness and
 the lust
 Of plenty — make me happy in my
 marriage!

Chorus (chanting). Artemis, Arte-
 mis, hear him, Ionian Artemis!

Camma. O thou that slayest the
 babe within the womb

Or in the being born, or after slayest him
 As boy or man, great Goddess, whose
 storm-voice

Unsockets the strong oak, and rears
 his root ¹⁶⁰

Beyond his head, and strows our fruits,
 and lays

Our golden grain, and runs to sea and
 makes it

Foam over all the fleeted wealth of
 kings

And peoples, hear!

Whose arrow is the plague — whose
 quick flash splits

The mid-sea mast, and rifts the tower
 to the rock,

And hurls the victor's column down
 with him

That crowns it, hear!

Who causeth the safe earth to shudder
 and gape,

And gulf and flatten in her closing
 chasm ¹⁷⁰

Domed cities, hear!

Whose lava-torrents blast and blacken
 a province

To a cinder, hear!

Whose winter-cataracts find a realm
 and leave it

A waste of rock and ruin, hear! I call
 thee

To make my marriage prosper to my
 wish!

Chorus. Artemis, Artemis, hear her,
 Ephesian Artemis!

Camma. Artemis, Artemis, hear me,
 Galatian Artemis!

I call on our own Goddess in our own
 Temple.

Chorus. Artemis, Artemis, hear her,
 Galatian Artemis! ¹⁸⁰

[*Thunder. All rise.*]

Synorix (aside). Thunder! Ay, ay,
 the storm was drawing hither
 Across the hills when I was being
 crown'd.

I wonder if I look as pale as she?

Camma. Art thou — still bent — on
 marrying?

Synorix. Surely — yet
 These are strange words to speak to
 Artemis.

Camma. Words are not always what they seem, my King.
I will be faithful to thee till thou die.

Synorix. I thank thee, Camma, — I thank thee.

Camma (turning to Antonius). Antonius,
Much graced are we that our Queen
Rome in you ¹⁸⁹
Deigns to look in upon our barbarisms.

[Turns, goes up steps to altar before the Goddess. Takes a cup from off the altar. Holds it towards Antonius. Antonius goes up to the foot of the steps opposite to Synorix.]

You see this cup, my lord.

[Gives it to him.]

Antonius. Most curious!
The many-breasted mother Artemis
Emboss'd upon it.

Camma. It is old, I know not
How many hundred years. Give it
me again.

It is the cup belonging our own Temple.

[Puts it back on altar, and takes up the cup of Act I. Showing it to Antonius.]

Here is another sacred to the Goddess,
The gift of Synorix; and the Goddess,
being

For this most grateful, wills, thro' me
her priestess,

In honor of his gift and of our marriage,

That Synorix should drink from his
own cup. ²⁰⁰

Synorix. I thank thee, Camma, — I thank thee.

Camma. For — my lord —
It is our ancient custom in Galatia
That ere two souls be knit for life
and death,

They two should drink together from
one cup,

In symbol of their married unity,
Making libation to the Goddess. Bring
me

The costly wines we use in marriages.

[They bring in a large jar of wine.]

Camma pours wine into cup.

(To Synorix.) See here, I fill it. *(To Antonius.)* Will you drink, my lord?

Antonius. I? Why should I? I am
not to be married.

Camma. But that might bring a
Roman blessing on us. ²¹⁰

Antonius (refusing cup). Thy pardon, priestess!

Camma. Thou art in the right.
This blessing is for Synorix and for
me.

See, first I make libation to the Goddess,

[Makes libation.]

And now I drink.

[Drinks and fills the cup again.]

Thy turn, Galatian King.
Drink and drink deep — our marriage
will be fruitful.

Drink and drink deep, and thou wilt
make me happy.

[Synorix goes up to her. She hands him the cup. He drinks.]

Synorix. There, Camma! I have
almost drain'd the cup —
A few drops left.

Camma. Libation to the Goddess.

[He throws the remaining drops on the altar and gives Camma the cup.]

Camma (placing the cup on the altar).

Why, then the Goddess hears.

[Comes down and forward to tripod. Antonius follows.]

Antonius,
Where wast thou on that morning
when I came ²²⁰

To plead to thee for Sinnatus's life,
Beside this temple half a year ago?

Antonius. I never heard of this request of thine.

Synorix (coming forward hastily to foot of tripod steps). I sought
him, and I could not find him.

Pray you,

Go on with the marriage rites.

Camma. *Antonius —*

'Camma!' Who spake?

Antonius. Not I.

Phæbe. Nor any here.

Camma. I am all but sure that some
one spake. *Antonius,*

If you had found him plotting against
Rome,

Would you have tortured Sinnatus to
death?

Antonius. No thought was mine of
torture or of death, ²³⁰

But had I found him plotting, I had
counsell'd him

To rest from vain resistance. Rome is
fated

To rule the world. Then, if he had
not listen'd,

I might have sent him prisoner to
Rome.

Synorix. Why do you palter with
the ceremony?

Go on with the marriage rites.

Camma. They are finish'd.

Synorix. How!

Camma. Thou hast drunk deep
enough to make me happy.

Dost thou not feel the love I bear to
thee

Glow thro' thy veins?

Synorix. The love I bear to thee
Glow thro' my veins since first I
look'd on thee. ⁵⁴⁰

But wherefore slur the perfect cere-
mony?

The sovereign of Galatia weds his
Queen.

Let all be done to the fullest in the
sight

Of all the Gods.

Nay, rather than so clip
The flowery robe of Hymen, we would
add

Some golden fringe of gorgeousness
beyond

Old use, to make the day memorial,
when

Synorix, first King, *Camma*, first
Queen o' the Realm,

Drew here the richest lot from Fate,
to live

And die together.

This pain — what is it? — again?
I had a touch of this last year — in —

Rome. ²⁵¹

Yes, yes. (*To Antonius.*) Your arm
— a moment — it will pass.

I reel beneath the weight of utter
joy —

This all too happy day, crown — queen
at once. [*Staggers.*]

O all ye Gods — Jupiter! — Jupiter!
[*Falls backward.*]

Camma. Dost thou cry out upon the
Gods of Rome?

Thou art Galatian-born. Our Arte-
mis

Has vanquish'd their Diana.

Synorix (on the ground). I am poi-
son'd.

She — close the Temple door. Let her
not fly.

Camma (leaning on tripod). Have I
not drunk of the same cup with
thee?

Synorix. Ay, by the Gods, of Rome
and all the world, ²⁶¹

She too — she too — the bride! the
Queen! and I —

Monstrous! I that loved her.

Camma. I loved him.

Synorix. O murderous mad-woman!
I pray you lift me

And make me walk awhile. I have
heard these poisons

May be walk'd down.

[*Antonius and Publius raise him
up.*]

My feet are tons of lead,
They will break in the earth — I am
sinking — hold me —

Let me alone.

[*They leave him; he sinks down on
ground.*]

Too late — thought myself wise —
A woman's dupe! Antonius, tell the
Senate

I have been most true to Rome —
would have been true ²⁷⁰

To her — if — if — [*Falls as if dead.*]

*Camma (coming and leaning over
him).* So falls the throne of an
hour.

Synorix (half rising). Throne? is it
thou? the Fates are throned, not
we —

Not guilty of ourselves — thy doom
and mine —

Thou — coming my way too — *Camma*
— good-night. [*Dies.*]

*Camma (upheld by weeping Priest-
esses).* Thy way? poor worm,
crawl down thine own black
hole

To the lowest hell. Antonius, is he
there?

I meant thee to have follow'd —
better thus.

Nay, if my people must be thralls of
Rome,

He is gentle, tho' a Roman.

[*Sinks back into the arms of the
Priestesses.*]

Antonius.

Thou art one

With thine own people, and though a
Roman I 280

Forgive thee, Camma.

Camma (raising herself). 'CAMMA!'

— why, there again

I am most sure that some one call'd.

O women,

Ye will have Roman masters. I am
glad

I shall not see it. Did not some old
Greek

Say death was the chief good? He
had my fate for it,

Poison'd. (*Sinks back again.*) Have I
the crown on? I will go

To meet him, crown'd! crown'd victor
of my will —

On my last voyage — but the wind has
fall'd —

Growing dark too — but light enough
to row.

Row to the Blessea Isles! the Blessed
Isles! — 290

Sinnatus!

Why comes he not to meet me? It is
the crown

Offends him — and my hands are too
sleepy

To lift it off (*Phœbe takes the crown off.*)
Who touch'd me then? I thank

you.

[*Rises, with outspread arms.*

There — league on league of ever-shin-
ing shore

Beneath an ever-rising sun — I see
him —

'Camma, Camma!' Sinnatus, Sinna-
tus! [*Dies*

THE PROMISE OF MAY

'A surface man of theories, true to none'

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

FARMER DOBSON.
MR. PHILIP EDGAR (*afterwards Mr. HAROLD*).
FARMER STEER (*DORA and EVA's Father*).
MR. WILSON (*a Schoolmaster*).
HIGGINS }
JAMES }
DAN SMITH } *Farm Laborers.*
JACKSON }
ALLEN }
DORA STEER.
EVA STEER.
SALLY ALLEN } *Farm Servants.*
MILLY }
Farm Servants, Laborers, etc.

THE PROMISE OF MAY

ACT I

SCENE. — BEFORE FARMHOUSE

Farming Men and Women. Farming Men carrying forms, etc., Women carrying baskets of knives and forks, etc.

First Farming Man. Be thou agawin' to the long barn?

Second Farming Man. Ay, to be sewer! Be thou?

First Farming Man. Why, o' coorse, fur it be the owd man's birthdaäy. He be heighty this very daäy, and 'e telled all on us to be i' the long barn by one o'clock, fur he'll gie us a big dinner, and haäfe th' parish 'll be theer, an' Miss Dora, an' Miss Eva, an' all! 11

Second Farming Man. Miss Dora be coomed back, then?

First Farming Man. Ay, haäfe an hour ago. She be in theer now. (*Pointing to house.*) Owd Steer wur afeärd she would n't be back i' time to keep his birthdaäy, and he wur in a tew about it all the mornin'; and he sent me wi' the gig to Littlechester to fetch 'er; and 'er an' the owd man they fell a kissin' o' one another like two sweet-arts i' the poorch as soon as he clapt eyes of 'er.

Second Farming Man. Foälsks says he likes Miss Eva the best.

First Farming Man. Naäy, I knaws nowt o' what foälsks says, an' I caäres nowt neither. Foälsks does n't hallus knaw thessens; but sewer I be, they be two o' the purtiest gels ye can see of a summer murnin'. 32

Second Farming Man. Beänt Miss Eva gone off a bit of 'er good looks o' laäte?

First Farming Man. Noä, not a bit.

Second Farming Man. Why, coöm awaäy, then, to the long barn. [*Exeunt.*]

DORA looks out of window. Enter DOBSON.

DORA (*singing*).

The town lay still in the low sunlight, 40
The hen cluckt late by the white farm gate,
The maid to her daäy came in from the

cow,
The stock-dove coo'd at the fall of night,
The blossom had open'd on every bough;
O, joy for the promise of May, of May,
O, joy for the promise of May!

(*Nodding at Dobson.*) I'm coming down, Mr. Dobson. I have n't seen Eva yet. Is she anywhere in the garden? 50

Dobson. Noä, Miss. I ha'n't seed 'er neither.

DORA (enters singing).

But a red fire woke in the heart of the town,
And a fox from the glen ran away with the hen,
And a cat to the cream, and a rat to the cheese;
And the stock-dove coo'd, till a kite dropt down,
And a salt wind burnt the blossoming trees;
O, grief for the promise of May, of May,
O, grief for the promise of May!

I don't know why I sing that song;
I don't love it. 61

Dobson. Blessings on your pretty voice, Miss Dora! Wheer did they larn ye that?

Dora. In Cumberland, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson. An' how did ye leäve the owd uncle i' Coomberland?

Dora. Getting better, Mr. Dobson. But he'll never be the same man again. 71

Dobson. An' how d' ye find the owd man 'ere?

Dora. As well as ever. I came back to keep his birthday.

Dobson. Well, I be coomed to keep his birthday an' all. The owd man be heifty to-däy, beänt he? 78

Dora. Yes, Mr. Dobson. And the day's bright like a friend, but the wind east like an enemy. Help me to move this bench for him into the sun. *(They move bench.)* No, not that way—here, under the apple-tree. Thank you. Look how full of rosy blossom it is. [Pointing to apple-tree.]

Dobson. Theer be redder blossoms nor them, Miss Dora.

Dora. Where do they blow, Mr. Dobson? 90

Dobson. Under your eyes, Miss Dora.

Dora. Do they?

Dobson. And your eyes be as blue as—

Dora. What, Mr. Dobson? A butcher's frock?

Dobson. No, Miss Dora; as blue as— 99

Dora. Bluebell, harebell, speed-well, blue-bottle, succory, forget-me-not!

Dobson. No, Miss Dora; as blue as—

Dora. The sky? or the sea on a blue day?

Dobson. Naäy then. I meän'd they be as blue as violets.

Dora. Are they? 109

Dobson. Theer ye goäs agcän, Miss, niver believing owt I says to ye—hallus a-fobbing ma off, tho' ye knaws I love ye. I warrants ye'll think moor o' this young Squire Edgar as ha' coomed among us—the Lord knaws how—ye'll think more on 'is little finger than hall my hand at the haltar.

Dora. Perhaps, Master Dobson. I can't tell, for I have never seen him. But my sister wrote that he was mighty pleasant, and had no pride in him. 121

Dobson. He'll be arter you now, Miss Dora.

Dora. Will he? How can I tell?

Dobson. He's been arter Miss Eva, haän't he?

Dora. Not that I know.

Dobson. Did n't I spy 'em a-sitting i' the woodbine harbor together?

Dora. What of that? Eva told me that he was taking her likeness. He's an artist. 132

Dobson. What's a hartist? I doänt believe he's iver a 'eart under his waist-coat. And I tells ye what, Miss Dora: he's no respect for the Queen, or the parson, or the justice o' peace, or owt. I ha' heard 'im a-gawin' on 'ud make your 'air—God bless it!—stan' on end. And wuss nor that. When theer wur a meeting o' farmers at Little-chester t' other däy, and they was all a-crying out at the bad times, he cooms up, and he calls out among our oän men, 'The land belongs to the people!' 146

Dora. And what did you say to that?

Dobson. Well, I says, s'pose my pig's the land, and you says it belongs to the parish, and theer be a thousand i' the parish, taäkin' in the women and childer; and s'pose I kills my pig, and g'ies it among 'em, why there wud n't be a dinner for nawbody, and I should ha' lost the pig. 155

Dora. And what did he say to that?

Dobson. Nowt—what could he säy? But I taäkes 'im fur a bad lot

and a burn fool, and I haates the very sight on him. ¹⁶⁰

Dora (looking at Dobson). Master Dobson, you are a comely man to look at.

Dobson. I thank you for that, Miss Dora, onyhow.

Dora. Ay, but you turn right ugly when you're in an ill temper; and I promise you that if you forget yourself in your behavior to this gentleman, my father's friend, I will never change word with you again. ¹⁷¹

Enter FARMING MAN from barn.

Farming Man. Miss, the farming men 'ull hev their dinner i' the long barn, and the master 'ud be strainge an' pleased if you'd step in fust, and see that all be right and reg'lar fur 'em afoor he coom. ¹⁷¹ *[Exit.]*

Dora. I go. Master Dobson, did you hear what I said? ¹⁷⁹

Dobson. Yeäs, yeäs! I'll not meddle wi' 'im if he doänt meddle wi' meä. *(Exit Dora.)* 'Coomly,' says she. I niver thowt o' mysen i' that waäy; but if she'd taäke to ma i' that waäy, or ony waäy, I'd slaäve out my life fur 'er. 'Coomly to look at,' says she — but she said it spiteful-like. To look at — yeäs, 'coomly;' and she may n't be so fur out theer. But if that be nowt to she, then it be nowt to me. *(Looking off stage.)* Schoolmaster! Why if Steer han't haxed schoolmaster to dinner, thaw'e knaws I was hallus ageän heving schoolmaster i' the parish! fur him as be handy wi' a booök beänt but haäfe a hand at a pitchfork.

Enter WILSON.

Well, Wilson. I seed that one cow o' thine i' the pinfold ageän as I wur a-coomin' 'ere. ¹⁹⁹

Wilson. Very likely, Mr. Dobson. She will break fence. I can't keep her in order.

Dobson. An' if tha can't keep thy one cow i' horder, how can tha keep all thy scholars i' horder? But let that goä by. What dost a know o' this Mr. Hedgar as be a-lodgin' wi' ye? I coom'd upon 'im t' other daäy lookin' at the coontry, then a-scrattin' upon a bit o' paäper, then a-lookin' ageän; and I taäked 'im fur soom sort o' a land-surveyor — but a beänt. ²¹²

Wilson. He's a Somersetshire man, and a very civil-spoken gentleman.

Dobson. Gentleman! What be he a-doing here ten mile an' moor fro' a raäil? We laäys out o' the waäy fur gentlefoälk altogether — leästwaäys they niver cooms 'ere but fur the trout i' our beck, fur they be know'd as far as Littlecheester. But 'e doänt fish neither. ²²²

Wilson. Well, it's no sin in a gentleman not to fish.

Dobson. Noä, but I haates 'im.

Wilson. Better step out of his road, then, for he's walking to us, and with a book in his hand.

Dobson. An' I haates booöks an' all, fur they puts foälk off the owd waäys. *Enter EDGAR, reading — not seeing*

DOBSON and WILSON.

Edgar. This author, with his charm of simple style ²³¹

And close dialectic, all but proving man
An automatic series of sensations,
Has often numb'd me into apathy
Against the unpleasant jolts of this
rough road
That breaks off short into the abysses
— made me

A quietist taking all things easily.

Dobson (aside). There mun be summut wrong theer, Wilson, fur I doänt understan' it. ²⁴⁰

Wilson (aside). Nor I either, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson (scornfully). An' thou doänt understan' it neither — and thou schoolmaster an' all!

Edgar. What can a man, then, live for but sensations,
Pleasant ones? men of old would
undergo

Unpleasant for the sake of pleasant
ones

Hereafter, like the Moslem beauties
waiting

To clasp their lovers by the golden
gates. ²⁵⁰

For me, whose cheerless Houris after
death

Are Night and Silence, pleasant ones
— the while —

If possible, here! to crop the flower
and pass.

Dobson. Well, I never 'eärd the likes o' that afoor.

Wilson (aside). But I have, Mr. Dobson. It's the old Scripture text, 'Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.' I'm sorry for it, for, tho' he never comes to church, I thought better of him. 260

Edgar. 'What are we,' says the blind old man in Lear?
'As flies to the gods; they kill us for their sport.'

Dobson (aside). Then the owd man i' Lear should be shaamed of hissen, but noan o' the parishes goäs by that naame 'ereabouts.

Edgar. The gods! but they, the shadows of ourselves,
Have past for ever. It is Nature kills,
And not for *her* sport either. She knows nothing.

Man only knows, the worse for him!
for why 270
Cannot *he* take his pastime like the flies?

And if my pleasure breed another's pain,

Well — is not that the course of Nature too,

From the dim dawn of being — her main law

Whereby she grows in beauty — that her flies

Must massacre each other? this poor Nature!

Dobson. Natur! Natur! Well, it be i' *my* natur to knock 'im o' the 'eäð now; but I weänt.

Edgar. A quietist taking all things easily — why — 280

Have I been dipping into this again
To steel myself against the leaving her?

[*Closes book, seeing Wilson.*
Good day!

Wilson. Good day, sir.

[*Dobson looks hard at Edgar.*

Edgar (to Dobson). Have I the pleasure, friend, of knowing you?

Dobson. Dobson.

Edgar. Good day, then, Dobson.

[*Exit.*
Dobson. 'Good daäy, then, Dobson!' Civil-spoken i'deed! Why, Wilson, tha 'eärd 'im thysen — the feller could n't find a Mister in his mouth fur me, as farms five hoonderd naäcre. 294

Wilson. You never find one for me, Mr. Dobson.

Dobson. Noä, fur thou be nobbut schoolmaster; but I taäkes 'im for a Lunnun swindler, and a burn fool.

Wilson. He can hardly be both, and he pays me regular every Saturday.

Dobson. Yeäs; but I haätes 'im.

Enter STEER, FARM MEN and WOMEN.

Steer (goes and sits under apple-tree).
Hev' ony o' ye seen Eva? 302

Dobson. Noä, Mr. Steer.

Steer. Well, I reckons they 'll hev' a fine cider-crop to-year if the blossom 'owds. Good murnin', neighbors, and the saäme to you, my men. I taäkes it kindly of all o' you that you be coomed — what's the newspaäper word, Wilson? — celebrate — to celebrate my birthdaäy i' this fashion. Niver man 'ed better friends, and I will saäy niver master 'ed better men; fur thaw I may ha' fallen out wi' ye sometimes, the fault, mebbe, wur as much mine as yours; and, thaw I says it mysen, niver men 'ed a better master, and I knaws what men be, and what masters be, fur I wur nobbut a laäbörer, and now I be a landlord — burn a plowman, and now, as far as money goäs, I be a gentleman, thaw I beänt naw scholard, fur I 'ednt naw time to maäke mysen a scholard while I wur maäkin' mysen a gentleman, but I ha' taäen good care to turn out boäth my darters right down fine laädies.

Dobson. An' soä they be. 329

First Farming Man. Soä they be! soä they be!

Second Farming Man. The Lord bless boäth on 'em!

Third Farming Man. An' the saäme to you, master!

Fourth Farming Man. And long life to boäth on 'em! An' the saäme to you, Master Steer, likewise!

Steer. Thank ye!

Enter EVA.

Wheer 'asta been? 340

Eva (timidly). Many happy returns of the day, father.

Steer. They can't be many, my dear, but I 'oäpes they 'll be 'appy.

Dobson. Why, tha looks haäle anew to last to a hoonderd.

Steer. An' why should n't I last to a

hoonderd? Haale! why should n't I be haale? fur thaw I be heighty this very daaly, I niver 'es sa much as one pin's prick of paäin; an' I can taäke my glass along wi' the youngest, fur I niver touched a drop of owt till my oän wedding-daaly, an' then I wur turned huppads o' sixty. Why should n't I be haale? I ha' plowed the ten-aäcre — it be mine now — afoor ony o' ye wur burn — ye all knaws the ten aäcre — I mun ha' plowed it moor nor a hoonderd times; hallushup at sunrise, and I'd drive the plow straät as a line right i' the faäce o' the sun, then back ageän, a-follering my oän shadder — then hup ageän i' the faäce o' the sun. Eh! how the sun 'ud shine, and the larks 'ud sing i' them daäys, and the smell o' the mou'd an' all. Eh! if I could ha' gone on wi' the plowin' nob-but the smell o' the mou'd 'ud ha' maäde ma live as long as Jerusalem.

Eva. Methuselah, father. 371

Steer. Ay, lass, but when thou be as owd as me thou'll put one word fur another as I does.

Dobson. But, Steer, thaw thou be haälö anew I seed tha a-limpin' up just now wi' the roomatics i' the knee.

Steer. Roomatics! Noä; I laäme't my knee last night running arter a thief. Beänt there house-breakers down i' Littlechester, Dobson, — döänt ye hear of ony? 382

Dobson. Ay, that there be. Immanuel Goldsmith's was broke into o' Monday night, and ower a hoonderd pounds worth o' rings stolen.

Steer. So I thowt, and I heärd the winder — that's the winder at the end o' the passage, that goäs by thy chaumber. (*Turning to Eva.*) Why, lass, what maäkes tha sa red? Did'e git into thy chaumber? 392

Eva. Father!

Steer. Well, I runned arter thief i' the dark, and fell ageän coalscuttle and my kneä gev waäy or I'd ha' cotched 'im, but afoor I coomed up he got thruff the winder ageän.

Eva. Got thro' the window again?

Steer. Ay, but he left the mark of 'is foot i' the flower-bed; now theer be noän o' my men, thinks I to mysen, 'ud ha' done it 'cep it were Dan Smith,

fur I cotched 'im once a-stealin' coäls, an' I sent fur 'im, an' I measured his foot wi' the mark i' the bed, but it would n't fit — seeäms to me the mark wur maäde by a Lunnun boot. (*Looks at Eva.*) Why, now, what maäkes tha sa white? 410

Eva. Fright, father!

Steer. Maäke thysen eäsy. I'll hev the winder naäiled up, and put Towser under it.

Eva (*clasp ing her hands*). No, no, father! Towser'll tear him all to pieces.

Steer. Let him keep awaäy, then; but coom, coom! let's be gawin. They ha' broached a barrel of aäle i' the long barn, and the fiddler be theer, and the lads and lassies 'ull hev a dance. 422

Eva (*aside*). Dance! small heart have I to dance. I should seem to be dancing upon a grave.

Steer. Wheer be Mr. Edgar? about the premises?

Dobson. Hallus about the premises!

Steer. So much the better, so much the better. I likes 'im, and Eva likes 'im. Eva can do owt wi' 'im; look for 'im, Eva, and bring 'im to the barn. He 'ant naw pride in 'im, and we'll git 'm to speechify for us arter dinner.

Eva. Yes, father! [*Exit.*]

Steer. Coom along then, all the rest o' ye! Church-warden be a coomin', thaw me and 'im we niver 'grees about the tithe; and parson mebbe, thaw he niver mended that gap i' the glebe fence as I telled 'im; and blacksmith, thaw he niver shoes a horse to my likings; and baäker, thaw I sticks to hoäm-maäde — but all on 'em welcome, all on 'em welcome; and I've hed the long barn cleared out of all the machines, and the sacks, and the taätters, and the mangles, and theer'll be room anew for all o' ye. Foller me.

All. Yeäs, yeäs! Three cheers for Mr. Steer. 451

[*All exeunt except Dobson into barn.*]

Enter EDGAR.

Dobson (*who is going, turns*). Squire! if so be you be a squire.

Edgar. Dobbins, I think.

Dobson. Dobbins, you thinks; and I thinks ye weärs a Lunnun boot.

Edgar. Well?

Dobson. And I thinks I'd like to take the measure o' your foot.

Edgar. Ay, if you'd like to measure your own length upon the grass. ⁴⁶¹

Dobson. Coom, coom, that's a good un. Why, I could throw four o' ye; but I promised one of the Misses I would n't meddle wi' ye, and I weant.
 [*Exit into barn.*]

Edgar. Jealous of me with Eva! Is it so?

Well, tho' I grudge the pretty jewel, that I

Have worn, to such a clod, yet that might be

The best way out of it, if the child could keep

Her counsel. I am sure I wish her happy. ⁴⁷⁰

But I must free myself from this entanglement.

I have all my life before me — so has she —

Give her a month or two, and her affections

Will flower toward the light in some new face.

Still I am half-afraid to meet her now. She will urge marriage on me. I hate tears.

Marriage is but an old tradition. I hate Traditions, ever since my narrow father,

After my frolic with his tenant's girl, Made younger elder son, violated the whole ⁴⁸⁰

Tradition of our land, and left his heir,

Born, happily, with some sense of art, to live

By brush and pencil. By and by, when Thought

Comes down among the crowd, and man perceives that

The lost gleam of an after-life but leaves him

A beast of prey in the dark, why then the crowd

May wreak my wrongs upon my wrongers. Marriage!

That fine, fat, hook-nosed uncle of mine, old Harold,

Who leaves me all his land at Littlechester,

He, too, would oust me from his will, if I ⁴⁹⁰

Made such a marriage. And marriage in itself —

The storm is hard at hand will sweep away

Thrones, churches, ranks, traditions, customs, marriage

One of the feeblest! Then the man, the woman,

Following their best affinities, will each

Bid their old bond farewell with smiles, not tears;

Good wishes, not reproaches; with no fear

Of the world's gossiping clamor, and no need

Of veiling their desires.

Conventionalism, Who shrieks by day at what she does by night, ⁵⁰⁰

Would call this vice; but one time's vice may be

The virtue of another; and Vice and Virtue

Are but two masks of self; and what hereafter

Shall mark out Vice from Virtue in the gulf

Of never-dawning darkness?

Enter EVA.

My sweet Eva, Where have you lain in ambush all the morning?

They say your sister, Dora, has returned,

And that should make you happy, if you love her!

But you look troubled.

Eva. O, I love her so, I was afraid of her, and I hid myself. ⁵¹⁰

We never kept a secret from each other;

She would have seen at once into my trouble,

And ask'd me what I could not answer.

O, Philip, Father heard you last night. Our savage mastiff,

That all but kill'd the beggar, will be placed

Beneath the window, Philip.

Edgar. Savage, is he? What matters? Come, give me your hand and kiss me

This beautiful May-morning.

Eva. The most beautiful May we have had for many years!

Edgar. And here is the most beautiful morning of this May.

Nay, you must smile upon me! There — you make

The May and morning still more beautiful,

You, the most beautiful blossom of the May.

Eva. Dear Philip, all the world is beautiful

If we were happy, and could chime in with it.

Edgar. True; for the senses, love, are for the world;

That for the senses.

Eva. Yes.

Edgar. And when the man, The child of evolution, flings aside His swaddling-bands, the morals of the tribe,

He, following his own instincts as his God,

Will enter on the larger golden age, No pleasure then taboo'd; for when the tide

Of full democracy has overwhelm'd This Old World, from that flood will rise the New,

Like the Love-goddess, with no bridal veil,

Ring, trinket of the Church, but naked Nature

In all her loveliness.

Eva. What are you saying?

Edgar. That, if we did not strain to make ourselves

Better and higher than Nature, we might be

As happy as the bees there at their honey

In these sweet blossoms.

Eva. Yes; how sweet they smell!

Edgar. There! let me break some off for you.

[*Breaking branch off.*]
Eva. My thanks.

But, look, how wasteful of the blossom you are!

One, two, three, four, five, six — you have robb'd poor father

Of ten good apples. O, I forgot to tell you

He wishes you to dine along with us, And speak for him after — you that are so clever!

Edgar. I grieve I cannot; but, indeed —

Eva. What is it?

Edgar. Well, business. I must leave you, love, to-day.

Eva. Leave me, to-day! And when will you return?

Edgar. I cannot tell precisely; but —

Eva. But what?

Edgar. I trust, my dear, we shall be always friends.

Eva. After all that has gone between us — friends!

What, only friends? [*Drops branch.*]

Edgar. All that has gone between us Should surely make us friends.

Eva. But keep us lovers.

Edgar. Child, do you love me now?

Eva. Yes, now and ever.

Edgar. Then you should wish us both to love for ever.

But, if you will bind love to one for ever,

Altho' at first he take his bonds for flowers,

As years go on, he feels them press upon him,

Begins to flutter in them, and at last Breaks thro' them, and so flies away for ever;

While, had you left him free use of his wings,

Who knows that he had ever dream'd of flying?

Eva. But all that sounds so wicked and so strange;

'Till death us part' — those are the only words,

The true ones — nay, and those not true enough,

For they that love do not believe that death

Will part them. Why do you jest with me, and try

To fright me? Tho' you are a gentleman,

I but a farmer's daughter —

Edgar. Tut! you talk Old feudalism. When the great Democracy

Makes a new world —

Eva. And if you be not jesting,

Neither the old world, nor the new, nor
father,

Sister, nor you, shall ever see me more.

Edgar (moved). Then — (*aside*) Shall
I say it? — (*aloud*) fly with me
to-day.

Eva. No! Philip, Philip, if you do
not marry me,

I shall go mad for utter shame and die.

Edgar. Then, if we needs must be
conventional,

When shall your parish-parson bawl
our banns 580

Before your gaping clowns?

Eva. Not in our church —
I think I scarce could hold my head
up there.

Is there no other way?

Edgar. Yes, if you cared
To fee an over-opulent superstition,
Then they would grant you what they
call a license

To marry. Do you wish it?

Eva. Do I wish it?

Edgar. In London.

Eva. You will write to me?

Edgar. I will.

Eva. And I will fly to you thro' the
night, the storm —

Yes, tho' the fire should run along the
ground,

As once it did in Egypt. O, you
see, 559

I was just out of school, I had no
mother —

My sister far away — and you, a gentle-
man,

Told me to trust you — yes, in every-
thing —

That was the only *true* love; and I
trusted —

O, yes, indeed, I would have died for
you.

How could you — O, how could you?
— nay, how could I?

But now you will set all right again,
and I

Shall not be made the laughter of the
village,

And poor old father not die miserable.

DORA (singing in the distance).

O, joy for the promise of May, of May,
O, joy for the promise of May! 601

Edgar. Speak not so loudly; that
must be your sister.

You never told her, then, of what has
past

Between us.

Eva. Never!

Edgar. Do not till I bid you.

Eva. No, Philip, no. [*Turns away.*]

Edgar (moved). How gracefully there
she stands

Weeping — the little Niobe! What!
we prize

The statue or the picture all the more
When we have made them ours! Is
she less lovable,

Less lovely, being wholly mine? To
stay — 609

Follow my art among these quiet fields,
Live with these honest folk —

and play the fool!
No! she that gave herself to me so
easily

Will yield herself as easily to another

Eva. Did you speak, Philip?

Edgar. Nothing more, farewell.
[*They embrace.*]

DORA (coming nearer).

O, grief for the promise of May, of May,
O, grief for the promise of May!

Edgar (still embracing her). Keep
up your heart until we meet
again.

Eva. If that should break before
we meet again?

Edgar. Break! nay, but call for
Philip when you will,

And he returns.

Eva. Heaven hears you, Philip
Edgar! 620

Edgar (moved). And *he* would hear
you even from the grave.

Heaven curse him if he come not at
your call! [*Exit.*]

Enter DORA.

Dora. Well, Eva!

Eva. O, Dora, Dora, how long you
have been away from home! O, how
often I have wished for you! It seemed
to me that we were parted for ever.

Dora. For ever, you foolish child!
What's come over you? We parted
like the brook yonder about the alder
island, to come together again in a
moment and to go on together again,
till one of us be married. But where
is this Mr. Edgar whom you praised

so in your first letters? You have n't even mentioned him in your last? ⁶³⁶

Eva. He has gone to London.

Dora. Ay, child; and you look thin and pale. Is it for his absence? Have you fancied yourself in love with him? That's all nonsense, you know, such a baby as you are. But you shall tell me all about it. ⁶⁴³

Eva. Not now — presently. Yes, I have been in trouble, but I am happy — I think, quite happy now.

Dora (taking Eva's hand). Come, then, and make them happy in the long barn, for father is in his glory, and there is a piece of beef like a house-side, and a plum-pudding as big as the round hay-stack. But see, they are coming out for the dance already. Well, my child, let us join them. ⁶⁵⁴

Enter all from barn, laughing. Eva sits reluctantly under apple-tree.

STEER enters, smoking, sits by Eva.

Dance.

ACT II

Five years have elapsed between Acts I. and II.

SCENE. — A MEADOW. ON ONE SIDE A PATHWAY GOING OVER A RUSTIC BRIDGE. AT BACK THE FARMHOUSE AMONG THE TREES. IN THE DISTANCE A CHURCH SPIRE

DOBSON and DORA.

Dobson. So the owd uncle i' Coom-berland be deäð, Miss Dora, beänt he?

Dora. Yes, Mr. Dobson, I've been attending on his death-bed and his burial.

Dobson. It be five year sin' ye went afoor to him, and it seems to me nob-but t'other day. Hes n't he left ye nowt?

Dora. No, Mr. Dobson. ¹⁰

Dobson. But he were mighty fond o' ye, warn't he?

Dora. Fonder of poor Eva — like everybody else.

Dobson (handing Dora basket of roses). Not like me, Miss Dora; and I ha' browt these roses to ye — I forgits what they calls 'em, but I hallus g'ied

soom on 'em to Miss Eva at this time o' year. Will ya taäke 'em? fur Miss Eva, she set the bush by my dairy winder afoor she went to school at Littlechester — so I allus browt soom on 'em to her; and now she be gone, will ye taäke 'em, Miss Dora? ²⁵

Dora. I thank you. They tell me that yesterday you mentioned her name too suddenly before my father. See that you do not do so again!

Dobson. Noä; I knaws a deäl better now. I secd how the owd man wur vext. ³²

Dora. I take them, then, for Eva's sake.

[Takes basket, places some in her dress.]

Dobson. Eva's saäke. Yeäls. Poor gell, poor gell! I can't abear to think on 'er now, fur I'd ha' done owt fur 'er mysen; an' ony o' Steer's men, an' ony o' my men 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, an' all the parish 'ud ha' done owt fur 'er, fur we was all on us proud on 'er, an' them ther be soom of her oän roses, an' she wur as sweet as ony on 'em — the Lord bless 'er — 'er oän sen; an' weänt ye taäke 'em now, Miss Dora, fur 'er saäke an' fur my saäke an' all? ⁴⁷

Dora. Do you want them back again?

Dobson. Noä, noä! Keep 'em. But I hed a word to saäy to ye.

Dora. Why, Farmer, you should be in the hay-field looking after your men; you couldn't have more splendid weather.

Dobson. I be a going theer; but I thowt I'd bring tha them roses fust. The weather's well anew, but the glass be a bit shaäky. S'iver we've led moäst on it. ⁶⁰

Dora. Ay! but you must not be too sudden with it either, as you were last year, when you put it in green, and your stack caught fire.

Dobson. I were insured, Miss, an' I lost nowt by it. But I weänt be too sudden wi' it; and I feel sewer, Miss Dora, that I ha' been noän too sudden wi' you, fur I ha' sarved fer ye well nigh as long as the man sarved fer 'is sweet'art i' Scriptur'. Weänt ye g'ie me a kind answer at last? ⁷²

Dora. I have no thought of marriage, my friend. We have been in such grief these five years, not only on my sister's account, but the ill success of the farm, and the debts, and my father's breaking down, and his blindness. How could I think of leaving him? 80

Dobson. Eh, but I be well to do; and if ye would nobbut hev me, I would taäke the owd blind man to my oän fireside. You should hev him allus wi' ye.

Dora. You are generous, but it cannot be. I cannot love you; nay, I think I never can be brought to love any man. It seems to me that I hate men, ever since my sister left us. O, see here. (*Pulls out a letter.*) I wear it next my heart. Poor sister, I had it five years ago. 'Dearest Dora, — I have lost myself, and am lost for ever to you and my poor father. I thought Mr. Edgar the best of men, and he has proved himself the worst. Seek not for me, or you may find me at the bottom of the river. — Eva.' 100

Dobson. Be that my fault?

Dora. No; but how should I, with this grief still at my heart, take to the milking of your cows, the fattening of your calves, the making of your butter, and the managing of your poultry?

Dobson. Naäy, but I hev an owd woman as 'ud see to all that; and you should sit i' your oän parlor quite like a laädy, ye should! 111

Dora. It cannot be.

Dobson. And plaäy the planner, if ye liked, all daäy long, like a laädy, ye should an' all.

Dora. It cannot be.

Dobson. And I would loove tha moor nor ony gentleman 'ud loove tha.

Dora. No, no; it cannot be. 119

Dobson. And p'raps ye hears 'at I soomtimes taäkes a drop too much; but that be all along o' you, Miss, because ye weänt hev me; but, if ye would, I could put all that o' one side eäsy anew.

Dora. Cannot you understand plain words, Mr. Dobson? I tell you, it cannot be. 128

Dobson. Eh, lass! Thy feyther eddicated his darters to marry gentle-föälk, and see what 's coomed on it.

Dora. That is enough, Farmer Dobson. You have shown me that, though fortune had born *you* into the estate of a gentleman, you would still have been Farmer Dobson. You had better attend to your hay-field. Good-afternoon. [*Exit.*]

Dobson. 'Farmer Dobson!' Well, I be Farmer Dobson; but I thinks Farmer Dobson's dog 'ud ha' knaw'd better nor to cast her sister's misfortune inter 'er teeth arter she'd been a-reädin' me the letter wi' 'er voice a-shaäkin', and the drop in 'er eye. Theer she goäs! Shall I foller 'er and ax 'er to maäke it up? Noä, not yet. Let 'er cool upon it; I likes 'er all the better fur taäkin' me down, like a laädy, as she be. Farmer Dobson! I be Farmer Dobson sewer anew; but if iver I cooms upo' Gentleman Hedgar ageän, and döänt laäy my cart-whip athurt 'is shou'ders, why then I beänt Farmer Dobson, but summum else — blaäme 't if I beänt! 136

Enter HAYMAKERS with a load of hay.

The last on it, ch?

First Haymaker. Yeäs.

Dobson. Hoäm wi' it, then.

[*Exit surlily.*]

First Haymaker. Well, it be the last löäd hoäm. 161

Second Haymaker. Yeäs, an' owd Dobson should be glad on it. What maäkes 'im allus sa glum?

Sally Allen. Glum! he be wuss nor glum. He coom'd up to me yister-daäy i' the haäy-field, when meät and my sweet'art was a-workin' along o' one side wi' one another, and he sent 'im awaäy to t' other end o' the field; and when I axed 'im why, he telled me 'at sweet'arts niver worked well together; and I telled 'im 'at sweet'arts allus worked best together; and then he called me a rude naäme, and I can't abide 'im. 176

James. Why, lass, döänt tha knaw he be sweet upo' Dora Steer, and she weänt sa much as look at 'im? And wheniver 'e sees two sweet'arts together like thou and me, Sally, he be

fit to bust hissen wi' spites and jealousies. ¹⁸³

Sally. Let 'im bust hissen, then, for owt I cares.

First Haymaker. Well, but, as I said afoor, it be the last loäd hoäm; do thou and thy sweet'art sing us hoäm to supper—'The Last Loäd Hoäm.' ¹⁹⁰

All. Ay! 'The Last Loäd Hoäm.'

SONG.

What did ye do, and what did ye saäy,
Wi' the wild white rose, an' the woodbine
sa gaäy,
An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa
blue—

What did ye saäy, and what did ye do,
When ye thowt there were nawbody watch-
in' o' you,
And you an' your Sally was forkin' the
haäy,

At the end of the daäy,
For the last loäd hoäm?

What did we do, and what did we saäy, ²⁰⁰
Wi' the briar sa green, an' the willer sa
graäy,
An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa
blue—

Do ye think I be gawin' to tell it to you,
What we mowt saäy, and what we mowt do,
When me an' my Sally was forkin' the
haäy,
At the end of the daäy,
For the last loäd hoäm?

But what did ye saäy, and what did ye do,
Wi' the butterflies out, and the swallers at
plaäy,
An' the midders all mow'd, an' the sky sa
blue? ²¹⁰

Why, coom then, owd feller, I'll tell it to
you;
For me an' my Sally we sweär'd to be true,
To be true to each other, let 'appen what
maäy,
Till the end of the daäy,
And the last loäd hoäm.

All. Well sung!

James. Fanny be the naäme i' the
song, but I swopt it fur *she*.

[*Pointing to Sally.*

Sally. Let ma aloän afoor foälk,
wilt tha? ²²⁰

First Haymaker. Ye shall sing that
ageän to-night, fur owd Dobson 'll
g'e us a bit o' supper.

Sally. I weänt goä to owd Dobson;
he wur rude to me i' tha haäy-field,

and he 'll be rude to me ageän to-
night. Owd Steer's gotten all his
grass down and wants a hand, and
I'll goä to him. ²²⁹

First Haymaker. Owd Steer g'ies
nubbut cowl tea to 'is men, and owd
Dobson g'ies beer.

Sally. But I'd like owd Steer's cowl
tea better nor Dobson's beer. Good-
bye. [*Going.*

James. G'e us a buss fust, lass.

Sally. I tell'd tha to let ma aloän!

James. Why, was n't thou and me
a-bussin' o' one another t' other side o'
the haäy-cock, when owd Dobson
coom'd upo' us? I can't let tha aloän
if I would, Sally.

[*Offering to kiss her.*

Sally. Git along wi' ye, do! [*Exit.*

[*All laugh; exeunt singing.*

To be true to each other, let 'appen what
maäy, ²⁴⁴
Till the end o' the daäy,
An' the last loäd hoäm.

Enter HAROLD.

Harold. Not Harold! 'Philip Edgar,
Philip Edgar!'

Her phantom call'd me by the name
she loved.

I told her I should hear her from the
grave.

Ay! yonder is her casement. I remem-
ber ²⁵⁰

Her bright face beaming starlike down
upon me

Thro' that rich cloud of blossom.
Since I left her

Here weeping, I have ranged the
world, and sat

Thro' every sensual course of that full
feast

That leaves but emptiness.

SONG.

To be true to each other, let 'appen what
maäy,
To the end o' the daäy,
An' the last loäd hoäm.

Harold. Poor Eva! O my God, if
man be only

A willy-nilly current of sensations—
Reaction needs must follow revel—

yet— ²⁶¹

Why feel remorse, he, knowing that
he must have

Moved in the iron grooves of Destiny?
Remorse then is a part of Destiny,
Nature a liar, making us feel guilty
Of her own faults.

My grandfather — of him
They say, that women —

O, this mortal house,
Which we are born into, is haunted
by
The ghosts of the dead passions of
dead men;

And these take flesh again with our
own flesh, 270
And bring us to confusion.

He was only
A poor philosopher who call'd the
mind
Of children a blank page, a *tabula*
rasa.

There, there, is written in invisible
inks

'Lust, Prodigality, Covetousness,
Craft,
Cowardice, Murder' — and the heat
and fire

Of life will bring them out, and black
enough,

So the child grow to manhood. Bet-
ter death

With our first wail than life —

SONG (*further off*).

Till the end o' the daäy, 280
An' the last loäð hoäm,
Loäð hoäm.

This bridge again!

(*Steps on the bridge.*)

How often have I stood
With Eva here! The brook among its
flowers!

Forget-me-not, meadow-sweet, willow-
herb.

I had some smattering of science then,
Taught her the learned names, anat-
omized

The flowers for her — and now I only
wish

This pool were deep enough, that I
might plunge

And lose myself for ever. 290

Enter DAN SMITH (*singing*).

Gee oop! whoä! Gee oop! whoä!
Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goä
Thruf slush an' squad
When roads was bad,

But hallus 'ud stop at the Vine-an'-the-Hop,
Fur boäth on 'em knawed as well as my-
sen

That beer be as good fur 'erses as men.
Gee oop! whoä! Gee oop! whoä! 298
Scizzars an' Pumpy was good uns to goä.

The beer's gotten oop into my 'eäð.
S'iver I mun git along back to the
farm, fur she tell'd ma to taäke the
cart to Littlechester.

Enter DORA.

Dora. Half an hour late! why are
you loitering here? Away with you
at once. [*Exit Dan Smith.*

(*Seeing Harold on bridge.*)

Some madman, is it,
Gesticulating there upon the bridge?
I am half afraid to pass.

Harold. Sometimes I wonder,
When man has surely learnt at last
that all 310

His old-world faith, the blossom of his
youth,

Has faded, falling fruitless — whether
then

All of us, all at once, may not be
seized

With some fierce passion, not so much
for Death

As against Life! all, all, into the
dark —

No more! — and science now could
drug and balm us

Back into nescience with as little
pain

As it is to fall asleep.

This beggarly life,
This poor, flat, hedged-in field — no
distance — this

Hollow Pandora-box, 320
With all the pleasures flown, not even
Hope

Left at the bottom!

Superstitious fool,
What brought me here? To see her
grave? her ghost?

Her ghost is everyway about me
here.

Dora (*coming forward*). Allow me,
sir, to pass you.

Harold. Eva! Eva!

Dora. What are you? Where do
you come from?

Dora. From the farm
Here, close at hand.

Harold. Are you—you are—that
Dora,
The sister. I have heard of you. The
likeness
Is very striking.

Dora. You knew Eva, then?

Harold. Yes—I was thinking of
her when— O, yes, ³³⁰
Many years back, and never since
have met
Her equal for pure innocence of
nature,
And loveliness of feature.

Dora. No, nor I.

Harold. Except, indeed, I have
found it once again
In your own self.

Dora. You flatter me. Dear Eva
Was always thought the prettier.

Harold. And her charm
Of voice is also yours; and I was
brooding
Upon a great unhappiness when you
spoke.

Dora. Indeed, you seem'd in trouble,
sir.

Harold. And you
Seem my good angel who may help
me from it. ³⁴⁰

Dora (aside). How worn he looks,
poor man! who is it, I wonder.
How can I help him? (*Aloud.*) Might
I ask your name?

Harold. Harold.

Dora. I never heard her mention
you.

Harold. I met her first at a farm in
Cumberland—
Her uncle's.

Dora. She was there six years ago.

Harold. And if she never mention'd
me, perhaps
The painful circumstances which I
heard—

I will not vex you by repeating
them—

Only last week at Littlechester, drove
me

From out her memory. She has disap-
pear'd, ³⁵⁰

They told me, from the farm—and
darker news.

Dora. She has disappear'd, poor
darling, from the world—
Left but one dreadful line to say, that
we

Should find her in the river; and we
draggy'd

The Littlechester river all in vain,
Have sorrow'd for her all these years
in vain.

And my poor father, utterly broken
down

By losing her—she was his favorite
child—

Has let his farm, all his affairs, I fear,
But for the slender help that I can

give, ³⁶⁰
Fall into ruin. Ah! that villain, Ed-
gar,

If he should ever show his face among
us,

Our men and boys would hoot him,
stone him, hunt him

With pitchforks off the farm, for all
of them

Loved her, and she was worthy of all
love.

Harold. They say, we should for-
give our enemies.

Dora. Ay, if the wretch were dead
I might forgive him;

We know not whether he be dead or
living.

Harold. What Edgar?

Dora. Philip Edgar of Toft Hall
In Somerset. Perhaps you know him?

Harold. Slightly.

(*Aside.*) Ay, for how slightly have I
known myself! ³⁷¹

Dora. This Edgar, then, is living?

Harold. Living? well—
One Philip Edgar of Toft Hall in
Somerset

Is lately dead.

Dora. Dead! is there more than
one?

Harold. Nay—now—not one, (*aside*)
for I am Philip Harold.

Dora. That one, is he then—dead!

Harold (aside). My father's death,
Let her believe it mine; this, for the
moment,

Will leave me a free field.

Dora. Dead! and this world
Is brighter for his absence, as that

other ³⁷⁹
Is darker for his presence.

Harold. Is not this
To speak too pitilessly of the dead?

Dora. My five-years' anger cannot
die at once,

Not all at once with death and him. I trust
 I shall forgive him — by and by — not now.
 O sir, you seem to have a heart; if you
 Had seen us that wild morning when we found
 Her bed unslept in, storm and shower lashing
 Her casement, her poor spaniel wailing for her,
 That desolate letter, blotted with her tears,
 Which told us we should never see her more —
 Our old nurse crying as if for her own child,
 My father stricken with his first paralysis,
 And then with blindness — had you been one of us
 And seen all this, then you would know it is not
 So easy to forgive — even the dead.
Harold. But sure am I that of your gentleness
 You will forgive him. She you mourn for seem'd
 A miracle of gentleness — would not blur
 A moth's wing by the touching; would not crush
 The fly that drew her blood; and, were she living,
 Would not — if penitent — have denied him *her* forgiveness. And perhaps the man himself,
 When hearing of that piteous death, has suffer'd
 More than we know. But wherefore waste your heart
 In looking on a chill and changeless past?
 Iron will fuse, and marble melt; the past
 Remains the past. But you are young, and — pardon me —
 As lovely as your sister. Who can tell
 What golden hours, with what full hands, may be
 Waiting you in the distance? Might I call
 Upon your father — I have seen the world —

And cheer his blindness with a traveller's tales?

Dora. Call if you will, and when you will. I cannot
 Well answer for my father; but if you
 Can tell me anything of our sweet Eva
 When in her brighter girlhood, I at least

Will bid you welcome, and will listen to you.

Now I must go.

Harold. But give me first your hand;

I do not dare, like an old friend, to shake it.

I kiss it as a prelude to that privilege
 When you shall know me better.

Dora (aside). How beautiful
 His manners are, and how unlike the farmer's!

You are staying here?

Harold. Yes, at the wayside inn
 Close by that alder-island in your brook,

'The Angler's Home.'

Dora. Are you one?

Harold. No, but I
 Take some delight in sketching, and the country

Has many charms, altho' the inhabitants

Seem semi-barbarous.

Dora. I am glad it pleases you;
 Yet I, born here, not only love the country,

But its inhabitants too; and you, I doubt not,

Would take to them as kindly, if you cared

To live some time among them.

Harold. If I did,
 Then one at least of its inhabitants
 Might have more charm for me than all the country.

Dora. That one, then, should be grateful for your preference.

Harold. I cannot tell, tho' standing in her presence.

(*Aside.*) She colors!

Dora. Sir!

Harold. Be not afraid of me,
 For these are no conventional flourishes.

I do most earnestly assure you that
 Your likeness —

[*Shouts and cries without.*]

Dora. What was that? my poor blind father— ⁴⁴⁰

Enter FARMING MAN.

Farming Man. Miss Dora, Dan Smith's cart hes runned ower a laady i' the holler laane, and they ha' ta'en the body up inter your chaumber, and they be all a-callin' for ye.

Dora. The body! — Heavens! I come!

Harold. But you are trembling. Allow me to go with you to the farm. ⁴⁴¹

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter DOBSON.

Dobson. What feller wur it as 'a' been a-talkin' fur haife an hour wi' my Dora? (*Looking after him.*) Secäms I ommost knaws the back on 'im— drest like a gentleman, too. Damn all gentleman, says I! I should ha' thowt they'd hed anew o' gentlefoalk, as I telled 'er to-däy when she fell foul upo' me. ⁴⁵⁶

Minds ma o' summun. I could swear to that; but that be all one, fur I haates 'im afoor I knaws what 'e be. Theer! he turns round. Philip Hedgar o' Soomerset! Philip Hedgar o' Soomerset! — Noä — yeäs — thaw the feller's gone and maäde such a litter of his faäce. ⁴⁶⁴

Eh lad, if it be thou, I'll Philip tha! a-pläy in' the säame gaäme wi' my Dora — I'll Soomerset tha!

I'd like to drag 'im thruff the herse-pond, and she to be a-lookin' at it. I'd like to leather 'im black and blue, and she to be a-laughin' at it. I'd like to fell 'im as deäd as a bullock! ⁴⁷²

(*Clenching his fist.*)

But what 'ud she säy to that? She telled me once not to meddle wi' 'im, and now she be fallen out wi' ma, and I can't coom at 'er.

It mun be *him*. Noä! Fur she'd niver 'a' been talkin' haäfe an hour wi' the divil 'at killed her oan sister, or she beänt Dora Steer. ⁴⁸⁰

Yeäs! Fur she niver knawed 'is faäce when 'e wur 'ere afoor; but I'll maäke 'er knaw! I'll maäke 'er knaw!

Enter HAROLD.

Naäy, but I mun git out on 'is waäy now, or I shall be the death on 'im. ⁴⁸¹

[*Exit.*]

Harold. How the clown glared at me! that Dobbins, is it,

With whom I used to jar? but can he trace me

Thro' five years' absence, and my change of name,

The tan of Southern summers and the beard?

I may as well avoid him.

Ladylike!

Lilylike in her stateliness and sweetness! ⁴⁹¹

How came she by it? — a daughter of the fields,

This Dora!

She gave her hand, unask'd, at the farm-gate;

I almost think she half return'd the pressure

Of mine. What, I that held the orange blossom

Dark as the yew? but may not those, who march

Before their age, turn back at times, and make

Courtesy to custom? and now the stronger motive,

Misnamed free-will — the crowd would call it conscience — ⁵⁰⁰

Moves me — to what? I am dreaming; for the past

Look'd thro' the present, Eva's eyes thro' hers —

A spell upon me! Surely I loved Eva More than I knew! or is it but the past

That brightens in retiring? O, last night

Tired, pacing my new lands at Littlechester,

I dozed upon the bridge, and the black river

Flow'd thro' my dreams — if dreams they were. She rose

From the foul flood and pointed toward the farm,

And her cry rang to me across the years, ⁵¹⁰

'I call you, Philip Edgar, Philip Edgar!

Come, you will set all right again, and father

Will not die miserable.' I could make his age

A comfort to him — so be more at peace With mine own self. Some of my

former friends

Would find my logic faulty; let them.

Color

Flows thro' my life again, and I have
lighted

On a new pleasure. Anyhow we must
Move in the line of least resistance
when

The stronger motive rules.

But she hates Edgar.

May not this Dobbins, or some other,
spy

Edgar in Harold? Well then, I must
make her

Love Harold first, and then she will
forgive

Edgar for Harold's sake. She said
herself

She would forgive him, by and by, not
now —

For her own sake *then*, if not for mine
— not now —

But by and by.

Enter DOBSON behind.

Dobson. By and by — eh, lad, dosta
knew this paäper? Ye dropt it upo'
the road. 'Philip Edgar, Esq.' Ay,
you be a pretty squire. I ha' fun' ye
out, I hev. Eh, lad, dosta know what
tha meäns wi' by and by? Fur if ye
be goin' to sarve our Dora as ye sarved
our Eva — then, by and by, if she
weänt listen to me when I be a-tryin'
to saäve 'er — if she weänt — look to
thysen, for, by the Lord, I'd think
na moor o' maäkin' an end o' tha nor
a carrion crow — noä — thaw they
hanged ma at 'Size fur it.

Harold. Dobbins, I think!

Dobson. I beänt Dobbins.

Harold. Nor am I Edgar, my good
fellow.

Dobson. Tha lies! What hasta been
saäyin' to my Dora?

Harold. I have been telling her of
the death of one Philip Edgar of Toft
Hall, Somerset. 550

Dobson. Tha lies!

Harold (*pulling out a newspaper*).
Well, my man, it seems that you
can read. Look there — under the
deaths.

Dobson. 'O the 17th, Philip Edgar,
o' Toft Hall, Somerset.' How coom
thou to be sa like 'im, then?

Harold. Naturally enough; for I

am closely related to the dead man's
family. 560

Dobson. An' 'ow coom thou by the
letter to 'im?

Harold. Naturally again; for, as I
used to transact all his business for
him, I had to look over his letters.
Now then, see these (*takes out letters*).
Half a score of them, all directed to
me — Harold.

Dobson. 'Arold! 'Arold! 'Arold, so
they be. 570

Harold. My name is Harold! Good
day, Dobbins! [*Exit.*]

Dobson. 'Arold! The feller's cleän
daäzed, an' maäzed, an' maäted, an'
muddled ma. Deäd! It mun be true,
fur it wur i' print as black as owt.
Naäy, but 'Good daäy, Dobbins.'
Why, that wur the very twang on
'im. Eh, lad, but whether thou be
Hedgar, or Hedgar's business man,
thou hes n't naw business 'ere wi' my
Dora, as I knows on, an' whether thou
calls thysen Hedgar or Harold, if thou
stick to she I'll stick to thee — stick
to tha like a weasel to a rabbit, I will.
Ay! and I'd like to shoot tha like a
rabbit an' all. 'Good daäy, Dobbins.'
Dang tha! 583

ACT III

SCENE. — A ROOM IN STEER'S HOUSE.

DOOR LEADING INTO BEDROOM AT
THE BACK.

Dora (*ringing a handbell*). Milly!

Enter MILLY.

Milly. The little 'ymn? Yeäs,
Miss; but I wur so ta'en up wi' leäd-
in' the owd man about all the blessed
murnin' 'at I ha' nobbut larned mysen
haäfe on it.

O man, forgive thy mortal foe,
Nor ever strike him blow for blow;
For all the souls on earth that live
To be forgiven must forgive. 16
Forgive him seventy times and seven;
For all the blessed souls in heaven
Are both forgivers and forgiven.

But I'll git the book ageän, and larn
mysen the rest, and saäy it to ye afoor

dark; ye ringed fur that, Miss, did n't ye?

Dora. No, Milly; but if the farming-men be come for their wages, to send them up to me. ²⁰

Milly. Yeäs, Miss. [*Exit.*

Dora (*sitting at desk counting money*). Enough at any rate for the present. (*Enter Farming Men.*) Good afternoon, my friends. I am sorry Mr. Steer still continues too unwell to attend to you, but the schoolmaster looked to the paying you your wages when I was away, did n't he?

Men. Yeäs; and thanks to ye. ³⁰

Dora. Some of our workmen have left us, but he sent me an alphabetical list of those that remain, so, Allen, I may as well begin with you.

Allen (*with his hand to his ear*). Halfabitchal! Taäke one o' the young uns fust, Miss, fur I be a bit deaf, and I wur hallus scaäred by a big word; leästwäays, I should be wi' a lawyer.

Dora. I spoke of your names, Allen, as they are arranged here (*shows book*)—according to their first letters. ⁴²

Allen. Letters! Yeäs, I sees now. Them be what they larns the childer' at school, but I were burn afoor schoolin'-time.

Dora. But, Allen, tho' you can't read, you could whitewash that cottage of yours where your grandson had the fever. ⁵⁰

Allen. I'll hev it done o' Monday.

Dora. Else if the fever spread, the parish will have to thank you for it.

Allen. Meä? why, it be the Lord's doin', noän o' mine; d'ye think I'd gi'e'em the fever? But I thanks ye all the saäme, Miss. (*Takes money.*)

Dora (*calling out names*). Higgins, Jackson, Luscombe, Nokes, Oldham, Skipworth! (*All take money.*) Did you find that you worked at all the worse upon the cold tea than you would have done upon the beer? ⁶³

Higgins. Noä, Miss; we worked naw wuss upo' the cowl tea; but we'd ha' worked better upo' the beer.

Dora. Come, come, you worked well enough, and I am much obliged to all of you. There's for you, and you, and you. Count the money and see if it's all right. ⁷¹

Men. All right, Miss; and thank ye kindly.

[*Exeunt* Luscombe, Nokes, Oldham, Skipworth.]

Dora. Dan Smith, my father and I forgave you stealing our coals.

[*Dan Smith advances to Dora.*

Dan Smith (*bellowing*). Whoy, O lor, Miss! that wur sa long back, and the walls sa thin, and the winders brokken, and the weather sa cowl, and my missus a-gittin' ower'er lyin'-in. ⁸¹

Dora. Did n't I say that we had forgiven you? But, Dan Smith, they tell me that you—and you have six children—spent all your last Saturday's wages at the ale-house; that you were stupid drunk all Sunday, and so ill in consequence all Monday that you did not come into the hay-field. Why should I pay you your full wages? ⁹⁰

Dan Smith. I be ready to taäke the pledge.

Dora. And as ready to break it again. Besides, it was you that were driving the cart—and I fear you were tipsy then, too—when you lamed the lady in the hollow lane. ⁹⁷

Dan Smith (*bellowing*). O lor, Miss! noä, noä! Ye sees the holler laäme be hallus sa dark i' the arternoon, and wheere the big esh-tree cuts athurt it, it gi'es a turn like, and 'ow should I see to laäme the laädy, and meä coomin' along pretty sharp an' all?

Dora. Well, there are your wages; the next time you waste them at a pot-house you get no more from me. (*Exit Dan Smith.*) Sally Allen, you worked for Mr. Dobson, did n't you?

Sally (*advancing*). Yeäs, Miss; but he wur so rough wi' ma, I could n't abide 'im. ¹⁰²

Dora. Why should he be rough with you? You are as good as a man in the hay-field. What's become of your brother?

Sally. 'Listed for a soädger, Miss, i' the Queen's Real Hard Tillery.

Dora. And your sweetheart—when are you and he to be married? ¹¹⁰

Sally. At Michaelmas, Miss, please God.

Dora. You are an honest pair. I will come to your wedding.

Sally. An' I thanks ye fur that, Miss, moor nor fur the waage.

(*Going — returns.*) 'A cotched ma about the waast, Miss, when 'e wur 'ere afoor, an' axed ma to be 'is little sweet'art, an' soä I knaw'd 'im when I seed 'im ageän an' I telled feyther on 'im. 122

Dora. What is all this, Allen?

Allen. Why, Miss Dora, meß and my maßtes, us three, we wants to hev three words wi' ye.

Higgins. That be 'im, and meß, Miss.

Jackson. An' meß, Miss. 129

Allen. An' we weänt mention naw naßmes, we'd as lief talk o' the divil afoor ye as 'im, fur they says the master goßs cleän off his'eäd when he'eärs the naßme on 'im; but us three, arter Sally'd telled us on 'im, we fun' 'im out a-walkin' i' West Field wi' a white 'at, nine o'clock, upo' Tuesday murnin', and all on us, wi' your leave, we wants to leather 'im.

Dora. Who? 140

Allen. Him as did the mischief here, five year' sin'.

Dora. Mr. Edgar?

Allen. Theer, Miss! You ha' naßmed 'im — not me.

Dora. He's dead, man — dead; gone to his account — dead and buried.

Allen. I beänt sa sewer o' that, fur Sally knaw'd 'im. Now then?

Dora. Yes; it was in the Somersetshire papers. 151

Allen. Then you mun be his brother, an' we'll leather 'im.

Dora. I never heard that he had a brother. Some foolish mistake of Sally's; but what! would you beat a man for his brother's fault? That were a wild justice indeed. Let bygones be bygones. Go home! Good-night! (*All exeunt.*) I have once more paid them all. The work of the farm will go on still, but for how long? We are almost at the bottom of the well: little more to be drawn from it — and what then? Encumbered as we are, who would lend us anything? We shall have to sell all the land, which father, for a whole life, has been getting together, again, and that, I am sure, would be the death of him. What am I to do?

Farmer Dobson, were I to marry him, has promised to keep our heads above water; and the man has doubtless a good heart, and a true and lasting love for me; yet — though I can be sorry for him — as the good Sally says, 'I can't abide him' — almost brutal, and matched with my Harold is like a hedge thistle by a garden rose. But then, he, too — will he ever be of one faith with his wife? which is my dream of a true marriage. Can I fancy him kneeling with me, and uttering the same prayer; standing up side by side with me, and singing the same hymn? I fear not. Have I done wisely, then, in accepting him? But may not a girl's love-dream have too much romance in it to be realized all at once, or altogether, or anywhere but in heaven? And yet I had once a vision of a pure and perfect marriage, where the man and the woman, only differing as the stronger and the weaker, should walk hand in hand together down this valley of tears, as they call it so truly, to the grave at the bottom, and lie down there together in the darkness which would seem but for a moment, to be wakened again together by the light of the resurrection, and no more partings for ever and for ever. (*Walks up and down. She sings.*) 203

O happy lark, that warblest high
Above thy lowly nest,
O brook, that brawlest merrily by
Thro' fields that once were blest,
O tower spiring to the sky,
O graves in daisies drest,
O Love and Life, how weary am I, 210
And how I long for rest!

There, there, I am a fool! Tears! I have sometimes been moved to tears by a chapter of fine writing in a novel; but what have I to do with tears now? All depends on me — father, this poor girl, the farm, everything; and they both love me — I am all in all to both; and he loves me too, I am quite sure of that. Courage, courage! and all will go well. (*Goes to bedroom door; opens it.*) How dark your room is! Let me bring you in here where there is still full daylight. (*Brings Eva forward.*) Why, you look better. 225

Eva. And I feel so much better that

I trust I may be able by and by to help you in the business of the farm; but I must not be known yet. Has any one found me out, Dora? ²³⁰

Dora. O, no; you kept your veil too close for that when they carried you in; since then, no one has seen you but myself.

Eva. Yes — this Milly.

Dora. Poor blind father's little guide, Milly, who came to us three years after you were gone, how should she know you? But now that you have been brought to us as it were from the grave, dearest Eva, and have been here so long, will you not speak with father to-day? ²⁴³

Eva. Do you think that I may? No, not yet. I am not equal to it yet.

Dora. Why? Do you still suffer from your fall in the hollow lane?

Eva. Bruised; but no bones broken.

Dora. I have always told father that the huge old ash-tree there would cause an accident some day; but he would never cut it down, because one of the Steers had planted it there in former times. ²⁵⁴

Eva. If it had killed one of the Steers there the other day, it might have been better for her, for him, and for you.

Dora. Come, come, keep a good heart! Better for me! that's good. How better for me? ²⁶¹

Eva. You tell me you have a lover. Will he not fly from you if he learn the story of my shame and that I am still living?

Dora. No; I am sure that when we are married he will be willing that you and father should live with us; for, indeed, he tells me that he met you once in the old times, and was much taken with you, my dear. ²⁷¹

Eva. Taken with me; who was he? Have you told him I am here?

Dora. No; do you wish it?

Eva. See, Dora; you yourself are ashamed of me (*weeps*), and I do not wonder at it. ²⁷⁷

Dora. But I should wonder at myself if it were so. Have we not been all in all to one another from the time when we first peeped into the bird's nest, waded in the brook, ran after the

butterflies, and prattled to each other that we would marry fine gentlemen, and played at being fine ladies?

Eva. That last was my father's fault, poor man. And this lover of yours — this Mr. Harold — is a gentleman? ²⁸⁹

Dora. That he is, from head to foot. I do believe I lost my heart to him the very first time we met, and I love him so much —

Eva. Poor Dora!

Dora. That I dare not tell him how much I love him.

Eva. Better not. Has he offered you marriage, this gentleman?

Dora. Could I love him else? ²⁹⁹

Eva. And are you quite sure that after marriage this gentleman will not be ashamed of his poor farmer's daughter among the ladies in his drawing-room?

Dora. Shamed of me in a drawing-room! Was n't Miss Vavasour, our schoolmistress at Littlechester, a lady born? Were not our fellow-pupils all ladies? Was n't dear mother herself at least by one side a lady? Can't I speak like a lady; pen a letter like a lady; talk a little French like a lady; play a little like a lady? Can't a girl when she loves her husband, and he her, make herself anything he wishes her to be? Shamed of me in a drawing-room, indeed! See here! 'I hope your lordship is quite recovered of your gout?' (*Curtseys.*) 'Will your ladyship ride to cover to-day?' (*Curtseys.*) I can recommend our Voltigeur.' 'I am sorry that we could not attend your grace's party on the 10th!' (*Curtseys.*) There, I am glad my nonsense has made you smile! ³²⁵

Eva. I have heard that 'your lordship,' and 'your ladyship,' and 'your grace' are all growing old-fashioned!

Dora. But the love of sister for sister can never be old-fashioned. I have been unwilling to trouble you with questions, but you seem somewhat better to-day. We found a letter in your bedroom torn into bits I could n't make it out. What was it? ³³⁶

Eva. From him! from him! He said we had been most happy to-

gether, and he trusted that some time we should meet again, for he had not forgotten his promise to come when I called him. But that was a mockery, you know, for he gave me no address; and there was no word of marriage; and, O Dora, he signed himself 'Yours gratefully'—fancy, Dora,—'gratefully'! 'Yours gratefully'!

Dora. Infamous wretch! (*Aside.*) Shall I tell her he is dead? No; she is still too feeble. 350

Eva. Hark! Dora, some one is coming. I cannot and I will not see anybody.

Dora. It is only Milly.

Enter MILLY, with basket of roses.

Well, Milly, why do you come in so roughly? The sick lady here might have been asleep.

Milly. Pleäse, Miss, Mr. Dobson telled me to säy he's browt some of Miss Eva's roses for the sick läddy to smell on. 361

Dora. Take them, dear. Say that the sick lady thanks him! Is he here?

Milly. Yeäs, Miss; and he wants to speak to ye partic'lar. 361

Dora. Tell him I cannot leave the sick lady just yet.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss; but he says he wants to tell ye summut very partic'lar. 370

Dora. Not to-day. What are you staying for?

Milly. Why, Miss, I be afeard I shall set him a-sweäring like onythink.

Dora. And what harm will that do you, so that you do not copy his bad manners? Go, child. (*Exit Milly.*) But, Eva, why did you write 'Seek me at the bottom of the river'? 379

Eva. Why? because I meant it!—that dreadful night! that lonely walk to Littlechester, the rain beating in my face all the way, dead midnight when I came upon the bridge; the river, black, slimy, swirling under me in the lamplight, by the rotten wharfs—but I was so mad that I mounted upon the parapet—

Dora. You make me shudder! 389

Eva. To fling myself over, when I heard a voice, 'Girl, what are you doing there?' It was a Sister of Mercy, come from the death-bed of a pauper,

who had died in his misery blessing God, and the Sister took me to her house, and bit by bit—for she promised secrecy—I told her all.

Dora. And what then? 398

Eva. She would have persuaded me to come back here, but I could n't. Then she got me a place as nursery governess, and when the children grew too old for me, and I asked her once more to help me, once more she said, 'Go home;' but I had n't the heart or face to do it. And then—what would father say?—I sank so low that I went into service—the drudge of a lodging-house—and when the mistress died, and I appealed to the Sister again, her answer—I think I have it about me—yes, there it is! 412

Dora (reads). 'My dear Child,—I can do no more for you. I have done wrong in keeping your secret; your father must be now in extreme old age. Go back to him and ask his forgiveness before he dies. SISTER AGATHA.' Sister Agatha is right. Don't you long for father's forgiveness? 421

Eva. I would almost die to have it!

Dora. And he may die before he gives it; may drop off any day, any hour. You must see him at once. (*Rings bell. Enter Milly.*) Milly, my dear, how did you leave Mr. Steer?

Milly. He's been a-moänin' and a-groänin' in 'is sleep, but I thinks he be wakkenin' oop. 430

Dora. Tell him that I and the lady here wish to see him. You see she is lamed, and cannot go down to him.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss, I will.

[*Exit Milly.*]

Dora. I ought to prepare you. You must not expect to find our father as he was five years ago. He is much altered; but I trust that your return—for you know, my dear, you were always his favorite—will give him, as they say, a new lease of life. 441

Eva (clinging to Dora). O, Dora, Dora!

Enter STEER led by MILLY.

Steer. Hes the cow cawved?

Dora. No, father.

Steer. Be the colt dead?

Dora. No, father.

Steer. He wur sa bellows'd out wi' the wind this murnin', 'at I tell'd 'em to gallop 'im. Be he dead? ⁴⁵⁰

Dora. Not that I know.

Steer. What hasta sent fur me, then, fur?

Dora (*taking Steer's arm*). Well, father, I have a surprise for you.

Steer. I ha' niver been surprised but once i' my life, and I went blind upon it.

Dora. Eva has come home.

Steer. Hoäm? fro' the bottom o' the river?

Dora. No, father, that was a mistake. She's here again. ⁴⁶³

Steer. The Steers was all gentle-folks i' the owd times, an' I worked early an' laäte to maäke 'em all gentle-folks ageän. The land belonged to the Steers i' the owd times, an' it belongs to the Steers ageän: I bowt it back ageän; but I could n't buy my darter back ageän when she lost her-sen, could I? I eddicated boäth on 'em to marry gentlemen, an' onc on 'em went an' lost her-sen i' the river.

Dora. No, father, she's here. ⁴⁷⁵

Steer. Here! she moänt coom here. What would her mother säy? If it be her ghöäst, we mun abide it. We can't keep a ghöäst out.

Eva (*falling at his feet*). O, forgive me! forgive me! ⁴⁸¹

Steer. Who said that? Taäke me awaäy, little gell. It be one o' my bad daäys.

[*Exit Steer led by Milly.*

Dora (*smoothing Eva's forehead*). Be not so cast down, my sweet Eva. You heard him say it was one of his bad days. He will be sure to know you to-morrow. ⁴⁸⁹

Eva. It is almost the last of my bad days, I think. I am very faint. I must lie down. Give me your arm. Lead me back again.

[*Dora takes Eva into inner room.*

Enter MILLY.

Milly. Miss Dora! Miss Dora!

Dora (*returning and leaving the bedroom door ajar*). Quiet! Quiet! What is it?

Milly. Mr. 'Arold, Miss.

Dora. Below? ⁴⁹⁹

Milly. Yeäs, Miss. He be säy'in' a word to the öwd man, but he'll coom up if ye lets 'im.

Dora. Tell him, then, that I'm waiting for him.

Milly. Yeäs, Miss. [*Exit.*

[*Dora sits pensively and waits.*

Enter HAROLD.

Harold. You are pale, my Dora! but the ruddiest cheek

That ever charm'd the plowman of your wolds

Might wish its rose a lily, could it look But half as lovely. I was speaking with

Your father, asking his consent — you wish'd me — ⁵¹⁰

That we should marry. He would answer nothing,

I could make nothing of him; but, my flower,

You look so weary and so worn! What is it

Has put you out of heart?

Dora. It puts me in heart Again to see you; but indeed the state Of my poor father puts me out of heart. Is yours yet living?

Harold. No — I told you.

Dora. When?

Harold. Confusion! — Ah well, well! the state we all

Must come to in our spring-and-winter world

If we live long enough! and poor Steer looks ⁵²⁰

The very type of Age in a picture, bow'd

To the earth he came from, to the grave he goes to,

Beneath the burthen of years.

Dora. More like the picture Of Christian in my 'Pilgrim's Progress' here,

Bow'd to the dust beneath the burthen of sin.

Harold. Sin! What sin?

Dora. Not his own.

Harold. That nursery-tale Still read, then?

Dora. Yes; our carters and our shepherds

Still find a comfort there.

Harold. Carters and shepherds!

Dora. Scorn! I hate scorn. A soul with no religion —

My mother used to say that such a
one 530

Was without rudder, anchor, compass
— might be

Blown every way with every gust and
wreck

On any rock; and tho' you are good
and gentle,

Yet if thro' any want —

Harold. Of this religion?
Child, read a little history, you will
find

The common brotherhood of man has
been

Wrong'd by the cruelties of his reli-
gions

More than could ever have happen'd
thro' the want

Of any or all of them.

Dora. But, O dear friend,
If thro' the want of any — I mean the
true one — 540

And pardon me for saying it — you
should ever

Be tempted into doing what might
seem

Not altogether worthy of you, I think
That I should break my heart, for you
have taught me

To love you.

Harold. What is this? some one
been stirring

Against me? he, your rustic amorist,
The polish'd Damon of your pastoral
here,

This Dobson of your idyll?

Dora. No, sir, no!
Did you not tell me he was crazed
with jealousy,

Had threaten'd even your life, and
would say anything? 550

Did I not promise not to listen to him,
Nor even to see the man?

Harold. Good; then what is it
That makes you talk so dolefully?

Dora. I told you —
My father. Well, indeed, a friend just
now,

One that has been much wrong'd,
whose griefs are mine,

Was warning me that if a gentleman
Should wed a farmer's daughter, he
would be

Sooner or later shamed of her among
The ladies, born his equals.

Harold. More fool he!

What, I that have been call'd a So-
cialist, 560
A Communist, a Nihilist — what you
will! —

Dora. What are all these?

Harold. Utopian idiotcies.
They did not last three Junes. Such
rampant weeds

Strangle each other, die, and make the
soil

For Cæsars, Cromwells, and Napoleons
To root their power in. I have freed
myself

From all such dreams, and some will
say because

I have inherited my uncle. Let them.
But — shamed of you, my empress! I
should prize 569

The pearl of beauty, even if I found it.
Dark with the soot of slums.

Dora. But I can tell you,
We Steers are of old blood, tho' we be
fallen.

See there our shield. (*Pointing to arms
on mantelpiece.*)

For I have heard the Steers
Had land in Saxon times; and your
own name

Of Harold sounds so English and so
old

I am sure you must be proud of it.

Harold. Not I!
As yet I scarcely feel it mine. I took
it

For some three thousand acres. I have
land now

And wealth, and lay both at your feet.
Dora. And what was

Your name before?

Harold. Come, come, my girl,
enough 580

Of this strange talk. I love you, and
you me.

True, I have held opinions, hold some
still,

Which you would scarce approve of;
for all that,

I am a man not prone to jealousies,
Caprices, humors, moods, but very
ready

To make allowances, and mighty slow
To feel offences. Nay, I do believe

I could forgive — well, almost any-
thing —

And that more freely than your formal
priest,

Because I know more fully than *he* can
What poor earthworms are all and
each of us, ⁵⁹¹

Here crawling in this boundless Na-
ture. *Dora*,

If marriage ever brought a woman
happiness

I doubt not I can make you happy.

Dora. You make me
Happy already.

Harold. And I never said
As much before to any woman living.

Dora. No?

Harold. No! by this true kiss, *you*
are the first

I ever have loved truly.

[*They kiss each other.*]

Eva (with a wild cry). Philip Edgar!

Harold. The phantom cry! *You*—
did you hear a cry?

Dora. She must be crying out 'Ed-
gar' in her sleep. ⁶⁰⁰

Harold. Who must be crying out
'Edgar' in her sleep?

Dora. Your pardon for a minute.
She must be waked.

Harold. Who must be waked?

Dora. I am not deaf; you fright
me.

What ails you?

Harold. Speak.

Dora. You know her, *Eva*.

Harold. *Eva*!

[*Eva opens the door and stands in
the entry.*]

She!

Eva. Make her happy, then, and I
forgive you. [*Falls dead.*]

Dora. Happy! What? Edgar? Is it
so? Can it be?

They told me so. Yes, yes! I see it all
now.

O, she has fainted! Sister, *Eva*, sister!
He is yours again—he will love *you*
again;

I give him back to you again. Look
up! ⁶¹⁰

One word, or do but smile! Sweet, do
you hear me?

[*Puts her hand on Eva's heart.*]

There, there—the heart, O God!—
the poor young heart

Broken at last—all still—and no-
thing left

To live for.

[*Falls on body of her sister.*]

Harold. Living—dead—She said
'all still.

Nothing to live for.'

She—she knows me—now—
(*A pause.*)

She knew me from the first, she jug-
gled with me,

She hid this sister, told me she was
dead—

I have wasted pity on her—not dead
now—

No! acting, playing on me, both of
them.

They drag the river for her! no, not
they! ⁶²⁰

Playing on me—not dead now—a
swoon—a scene—

Yet—how she made her wail as for
the dead!

Enter MILLY.

Milly. Please, Mister 'Arold.

Harold (roughly). Well?

Milly. The owd man's scoom'd agean
to 'issen, an' wants

To hev a word wi' ye about the mar-
riage.

Harold. The what?

Milly. The marriage.

Harold. The marriage?

Milly. Yeas, the marriage.

Granny says marriages be maide i'
eaven.

Harold. She lies! They are made in
hell. Child, can't you see?

Tell them to fly for a doctor.

Milly. O, law—yeas, Sir.
I'll run fur 'im mysen. [*Exit.*]

Harold. All silent there,
Yes, deathlike! Dead? I dare not

look. If dead, ⁶³¹

Were it best to steal away, to spare
myself,

And her too, pain, pain, pain?
My curse on all

This world of mud, on all its idiot
gleams

Of pleasure, all the foul fatalities
That blast our natural passions into
pains!

Enter DOBSON.

Dobson. You, Master Hedgar,
Harold, or whativer

They calls ye, for I warrants that ye
goas

By half a score o' naames — out o' the chamber!

[*Dragging him past the body.*]

Harold. Not that way, man! Curse on your brutal strength!

I cannot pass that way.

Dobson. Out o' the chamber!
I'll mash tha into nowt.

Harold. The mere wild-beast!

Dobson. Out o' the chamber, dang tha!

Harold. Lout, churl, clown!

[*While they are shouting and struggling Dora rises and comes between them.*]

Dora (to Dobson). Peace, let him be; it is the chamber of Death!

Sir, you are tenfold more a gentleman,

A hundred times more worth a woman's love,

Than this, this — but I waste no words upon him:

His wickedness is like my wretchedness —

Beyond all language.

(*To Harold.*) You — you see her there!

Only fifteen when first you came on her, 650

And then the sweetest flower of all the wolds,

So lovely in the promise of her May,
So winsome in her grace and gaiety,
So loved by all the village people here,

So happy in herself and in her home —

Dobson (agitated). Theer, theer! ha' done. I can't abear to see her. [*Exit.*]

Dora. A child, and all as trustful as a child!

Five years of shame and suffering broke the heart

That only beat for you; and he, the father,

Thro' that dishonor which you brought upon us, 660

Has lost his health, his eyesight, even his mind.

Harold (covering his face). Enough!

Dora. It seem'd so; only there was left

A second daughter, and to her you came

Veiling one sin to act another.

Harold. No!
You wrong me there! hear, hear me!

I wish'd, if you — [*Pauses.*]

Dora. If I —

Harold. Could love me, could be brought to love me

As I loved you —

Dora. What then?

Harold. I wish'd, I hoped
To make, to make —

Dora. What did you hope to make?

Harold. 'T were best to make an end of my lost life.

O Dora, Dora!

Dora. What did you hope to make? 670

Harold. Make, make! I cannot find the word — forgive it —

Amends.

Dora. For what? to whom?

Harold. To him, to you!
[*Falling at her feet.*]

Dora. To him! to me!

No, not with all your wealth,
Your land, your life! Out in the fiercest storm

That ever made earth tremble — he, nor I —

The shelter of *your* roof — not for one moment —

Nothing from *you*!

Sunk in the deepest pit of pauperism,
Push'd from all doors as if we bore the plague,

Smitten with fever in the open field,
Laid famine-stricken at the gates of Death — 681

Nothing from you!

But she there — her last word
Forgave — and I forgive you. If you ever

Forgive yourself, you are even lower and baser

Than even I can well believe you. Go!

[*He lies at her feet. Curtain falls.*]

CROSSING THE BAR

SUNSET and evening star,
And one clear call for me !
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark !
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark ;

For tho' from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

ADDITIONAL POEMS

NOTE. — The poems which follow include all those which have been omitted by the author from his latest revised editions, or never acknowledged by him. They are here printed because they have for the most part continued to have currency in America, although dropped from collective editions in England.

TIMBUCTOO ¹

‘Deep in that lion-haunted inland lies
A mystic city, goal of high emprise.’
CHAPMAN.

I stood upon the Mountain which o'er-
looks
The narrow seas, whose rapid inter-
val
Parts Afric from green Europe, when
the Sun
Had fall'n below th' Atlantic, and
above
The silent heavens were blench'd with
faery light,
Uncertain whether faery light or
cloud,
Flowing Southward, and the chasms
of deep, deep blue
Slumber'd unfathomable, and the stars
Were flooded over with clear glory
and pale.
I gazed upon the sheeny coast beyond,
There where the Giant of old Time
infix'd
The limits of his prowess, pillars
high
Long time erased from earth: even as
the Sea
When weary of wild inroad buildeth
up
Huge mounds whereby to stay his
yeasty waves.
And much I mused on legends quaint
and old
Which whilome won the hearts of all
on earth

¹ A Poem which obtained the Chancellor's Medal at the Cambridge Commencement, MDCCXXIX. By A. TENNYSON, of Trinity College.

Toward their brightness, ev'n as flame
draws air ;,
But had their being in the heart of
man
As air is th' life of flame: and thou
wert then
A center'd glory-circled memory,
Divinest Atalantis, whom the waves
Have buried deep, and thou of later
name,
Imperial Eldorado, roof'd with gold :
Shadows to which, despite all shocks
of change,
All on-set of capricious accident,
Men clung with yearning hope which
would not die.
As when in some great city where the
walls
Shake, and the streets with ghastly
faces throng'd,
Do utter forth a subterranean voice,
Among the inner columns far retired
At midnight, in the lone Acropolis,
Before the awful Genius of the place
Kneels the pale Priestess in deep faith,
the while
Above her head the weak lamp dips
and winks
Unto the fearful summoning without:
Nathless she ever clasps the marble
knees,
Bathes the cold hands with tears, and
gazeth on
Those eyes which wear no light but
that wherewith
Her phantasy informs them.
Where are ye,
Thrones of the Western wave, fair
Islands green ?
Where are your moonlight halls, your
cedarn glooms,
The blossoming abysses of your hills ?

Your flowering capes, and your gold-
 sanded bays
 Blown round with happy airs of odor-
 ous winds?
 Where are the infinite ways, which,
 seraph-trod,
 Wound thro' your great Elysian soli-
 tudes,
 Whose lowest deeps were, as with vis-
 ible love,
 Fill'd with Divine effulgence, circum-
 fused,
 Flowing between the clear and polish'd
 stems,
 And ever circling round their emerald
 cones
 In coronals and glories, such as gird
 The unfading foreheads of the Saints
 in Heaven?
 For nothing visible, they say, had
 birth
 In that blest ground, but it was play'd
 about
 With its peculiar glory. Then I raised
 My voice and cried, 'Wide Afric, doth
 thy Sun
 Lighten, thy hills enfold a city as fair
 As those which starr'd the night o' the
 elder world?
 Or is the rumour of thy Timbuctoo
 A dream as frail as those of ancient
 time?'
 A curve of whitening, flashing, ebb-
 ing light!
 A rustling of white wings! the bright
 descent
 Of a young Seraph! and he stood be-
 side me
 There on the ridge, and look'd into
 my face
 With his unutterable, shining orbs.
 So that with hasty motion I did veil
 My vision with both hands, and saw
 before me
 Such colour'd spots as dance athwart
 the eyes
 Of those that gaze upon the noonday
 Sun.
 Girt with a zone of flashing gold be-
 neath
 His breast, and compass'd round about
 his brow
 With triple arch of ever-changing
 bows,
 And circled with the glory of living
 light

And alternation of all hues, he stood.
 'O child of man, why muse you
 here alone
 Upon the Mountain, on the dreams of
 old
 Which fill'd the earth with passing
 loveliness,
 Which flung strange music on the
 howling winds,
 And odours rapt from remote Para-
 dise?
 Thy sense is clogg'd with dull mortal-
 ity;
 Thy spirit fetter'd with the bond of
 clay:
 Open thine eyes and see.'
 I look'd, but not
 Upon his face, for it was wonderful
 With its exceeding brightness, and the
 light
 Of the great Angel Mind which look'd
 from out
 The starry glowing of his restless eyes.
 I felt my soul grow mighty, and my
 spirit
 With supernatural excitation bound
 Within me, and my mental eye grew
 large
 With such a vast circumference of
 thought,
 That in my vanity I seem'd to stand
 Upon the outward verge and bound
 alone
 Of full beatitude. Each falling
 sense,
 As with a momentary flash of light,
 Grew thrillingly distinct and keen. I
 saw
 The smallest grain that dappled the
 dark earth,
 The indistinctest atom in deep air,
 The Moon's white cities, and the opal
 width
 Of her small glowing lakes, her silver
 heights
 Unvisited with dew of vagrant cloud,
 And the unsounded, undescended
 depth
 Of her black hollows. The clear gal-
 axy
 Shorn of its hoary lustre, wonderful,
 Distinct and vivid with sharp points
 of light,
 Blaze within blaze, an unimagin'd
 depth
 And harmony of planet-girded suns

And moon-encircled planets, wheel in wheel,
 Arch'd the wan sapphire. Nay—the hum of men,
 Or other things talking in unknown tongues,
 And notes of busy life in distant worlds
 Beat like a far wave on my anxious ear.

A maze of piercing, trackless, thrilling thoughts,
 Involving and embracing each with each,
 Rapid as fire, inextricably link'd,
 Expanding momentarily with every sight
 And sound which struck the palpitating sense,
 The issue of strong impulse, hurried through
 The riven rapt brain; as when in some large lake
 From pressure of descendant crags, which lapse
 Disjointed, crumbling from their parent slope
 At slender interval, the level calm
 Is ridg'd with restless and increasing spheres
 Which break upon each other, each th' effect
 Of separate impulse, but more fleet and strong
 Than its precursor, till the eye in vain
 Amid the wild unrest of swimming shade
 Dappled with hollow and alternate rise
 Of interpenetrated arc, would scan
 Definite round.

I know not if I shape
 These things with accurate similitude
 From visible objects, for but dimly now,
 Less vivid than a half-forgotten dream,
 The memory of that mental excellence
 Comes o'er me, and it may be I entwine
 The indecision of my present mind
 With its past clearness, yet it seems to me
 As even then the torrent of quick thought
 Absorbed me from the nature of itself
 With its own fleetness. Where is he that, borne

Adown the sloping of an arrowy stream,
 Could link his shallop to the fleeting edge,
 And muse midway with philosophic calm
 Upon the wondrous laws which regulate
 The fierceness of the bounding element?

My thoughts which long had grovelling'd in the slime
 Of this dull world, like dusky worms which house
 Beneath unshaken waters, but at once
 Upon some earth-awakening day of Spring
 Do pass from gloom to glory, and aloft
 Winnow the purple, bearing on both sides
 Double display of star-lit wings, which burn
 Fan-like and fibred with intensest bloom;
 Ev'n so my thoughts, erewhile so low, now felt
 Unutterable buoyancy and strength
 To bear them upward through the trackless fields
 Of undefin'd existence far and free.

Then first within the South me-thought I saw
 A wilderness of spires, and chrystal pile
 Of rampart upon rampart, dome on dome,
 Illimitable range of battlement
 On battlement, and the imperial height
 Of canopy o'ercanopied.

Behind
 In diamond light upsprung the dazzling peaks
 Of Pyramids, as far surpassing earth's
 As heaven than earth is fairer. Each aloft
 Upon his narrow'd eminence bore globes
 Of wheeling suns, or stars, or semblances
 Of either, showering circular abyss
 Of radiance. But the glory of the place
 Stood out a pillar'd front of burnish'd gold,

Interminably high, if gold it were
 Or metal more ethereal, and beneath
 Two doors of blinding brilliance,
 where no gaze
 Might rest, stood open, and the eye
 could scan,
 Through length of porch and valve
 and boundless hall,
 Part of a throne of fiery flame, where-
 from
 The snowy skirting of a garment hung,
 And glimpse of multitudes of multi-
 tudes
 That minister'd around it—if I saw
 These things distinctly, for my human
 brain
 Stagger'd beneath the vision, and
 thick night
 Came down upon my eyelids, and I
 fell.

 With ministering hand he raised me
 up:
 Then with a mournful and ineffable
 smile,
 Which but to look on for a moment
 fill'd
 My eyes with irresistible sweet tears,
 In accents of majestic melody,
 Like a swoln river's gushings in still
 night
 Mingled with floating music, thus he
 spoke:

 'There is no mightier Spirit than I
 to sway
 The heart of man: and teach him to
 attain
 By shadowing forth the Unattainable;
 And step by step to scale that mighty
 stair
 Whose landing-place is wrapt about
 with clouds
 Of glory of heaven.¹ With earliest
 light of Spring,
 And in the glow of fallow Summertide,
 And in red Autumn when the winds
 are wild
 With gambols, and when full-voiced
 Winter roofs
 The headland with inviolate white
 snow,
 I play about his heart a thousand
 ways,
 Visit his eyes with visions, and his
 ears

¹ 'Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect.'

With harmonies of wind and wave
 and wood,—
 Of winds which tell of waters, and of
 waters
 Betraying the close kisses of the
 wind—
 And win him unto me: and few there
 be
 So gross of heart who have not felt
 and known
 A higher than they see: They with
 dim eyes
 Behold me darkling. Lo! I have
 given thee
 To understand my presence, and to
 feel
 My fulness; I have fill'd thy lips with
 power.
 I have raised thee nigher to the spheres
 of heaven,
 Man's first, last home: and thou with
 ravish'd sense
 Listenest the lordly music flowing
 from
 Th' illimitable years. I am the Spi-
 rit,
 The permeating life which courseth
 through
 All th' intricate and labyrinthine veins
 Of the great vine of Fable, which,
 outspread
 With growth of shadowing leaf and
 clusters rare,
 Reacheth to every corner under hea-
 ven,
 Deep-rooted in the living soil of truth;
 So that men's hopes and fears take
 refuge in
 The fragrance of its complicated
 glooms,
 And cool implacèd twilights. Child
 of man,
 See'st thou yon river, whose transluc-
 ent wave,
 Forth issuing from the darkness,
 windeth through
 The argent streets o' th' city, imaging
 The soft inversion of her tremulous
 domes,
 Her gardens frequent with the stately
 palm,
 Her pagods hung with music of sweet
 bells,
 Her obelisks of rangèd chrysolite,
 Minarets and towers? Lo! how he
 passeth by,

And gulphs himself in sands, as not
enduring
To carry through the world those
waves, which bore
The reflex of my city in their depths.
Oh city! oh latest throne! where I
was raised
To be a mystery of loveliness
Unto all eyes, the time is well-nigh
come
When I must render up this glorious
home
To keen Discovery: soon yon brilliant
towers
Shall darken with the waving of her
wand;
Darken, and shrink and shiver into
huts,
Black specks amid a waste of dreary
sand,
Low-built, mud-wall'd, barbarian set-
tlements.
How chang'd from this fair city!'
Thus far the Spirit:
Then parted heaven-ward on the wing:
and I
Was left alone on Calpe, and the moon
Had fallen from the night, and all
was dark!

THE 'HOW' AND THE 'WHY'

?

I AM any man's suitor,
If any will be my tutor:
Some say this life is pleasant,
Some think it speedeth fast,
In time there is no present,
In eternity no future,
In eternity no past.
We laugh, we cry, we are born, we
die,
Who will riddle me the *how* and the
why?

The bulrush nods unto its brother.
The wheatears whisper to each
other:
What is it they say? what do they
there?
Why two and two make four? why
round is not square?
Why the rock stands still, and the light
clouds fly?

Why the heavy oak groans, and the
white willows sigh?
Why deep is not high, and high is not
deep?
Whether we wake, or whether we
sleep?
Whether we sleep, or whether we die?
How you are you? why I am I?
Who will riddle me the *how* and the
why?

The world is somewhat; it goes on
somehow:
But what is the meaning of *then* and
now?
I feel there is something; but how
and what?
I know there is somewhat: but what
and why?
I cannot tell if that somewhat be I.
The little bird pipeth — 'why?
why?'
In the summer woods when the sun
falls low,
And the great bird sits on the opposite
bough,
And stares in his face, and shouts
'how? how?'
And the black owl scuds down the
mellow twilight,
And chants 'how? how?' the whole
of the night.

Why the life goes when the blood is
spilt?
What the life is? where the soul
may lie?
Why a church is with a steeple built:
And a house with a chimney-pot?
Who will riddle me the *how* and the
what?
Who will riddle me the what and
the why?

THE BURIAL OF LOVE

His eyes in eclipse,
Pale-cold his lips,
The light of his hopes unfed,
Mute his tongue,
His bow unstrung
With the tears he hath shed,
Backward drooping his graceful
head
Love is dead:

His last arrow is sped ;
 He hath not another dart ;
 Go — carry him to his dark death-
 bed ;
 Bury him in the cold, cold heart —
 Love is dead.

O truest love ! art thou forlorn,
 And unrevenged ? thy pleasant
 wiles

Forgotten, and thine innocent
 joy ?

Shall hollow-hearted apathy,
 The cruellest form of perfect scorn,
 With languor of most hateful
 smiles,

For ever write,
 In the withered light

Of the tearless eye,
 An epitaph that all may spy ?
 No ! sooner she herself shall die.

For her the showers shall not fall,
 Nor the round sun shine that shineth
 to all ;

Her light shall into darkness change ;
 For her the green grass shall not
 spring,

Nor the rivers flow, nor the sweet
 birds sing,

Till Love have his full revenge.

TO —

SAINTED Juliet ! dearest name !

If to love be life alone,

Divinest Juliet,

I love thee, and live ; and yet
 Love unreturned is like the fragrant
 flame

Folding the slaughter of the sacrifice
 Offered to gods upon an altar-
 throne ;

My heart is lighted at thine eyes,
 Changed into fire, and blown about
 with sighs.

SONG

I

I' THE glooming light
 Of middle night
 So cold and white,

Worn Sorrow sits by the moaning
 wave,

Beside her are laid

Her mattock and spade,

For she hath half delved her own deep
 grave.

Alone she is there :

The white clouds drizzle : her hair falls
 loose :

Her shoulders are bare ;

Her tears are mixed with the beaded
 dews.

II

Death standeth by ;

She will not die ;

With glazed eye

She looks at her grave : she cannot
 sleep ;

Ever alone

She maketh her moan :

She cannot speak : she can only weep,
 For she will not hope.

The thick snow falls on her flake by
 flake,

The dull wave mourns down
 the slope,

The world will not change, and her
 heart will not break.

SONG

I

THE lintwhite and the throstlecock

Have voices sweet and clear ;

All in the bloomed May.

They from the blosmy brere

Call to the fleeting year,

If that he would them hear

And stay.

Alas ! that one so beautiful

Should have so dull an ear !

II

Fair year, fair year, thy children call

But thou art deaf as death ;

All in the bloomed May.

When thy light perisheth

That from thee issueth,

Our life evanisheth :

O, stay !

Alas ! that lips so cruel-dumb

Should have so sweet a breath

III

Fair year, with brows of royal love
 Thou comest, as a king,
 All in the blooméd May.
 Thy golden largess fling,
 And longer hear us sing;
 Though thou art fleet of wing,
 Yet stay.
 Alas! that eyes so full of light
 Should be so wandering!

IV

Thy locks are all of sunny sheen
 In rings of gold yronne,¹
 All in the blooméd May.
 We pri'thee pass not on;
 If thou dost leave the sun,
 Delight is with thee gone.
 O, stay!
 Thou art the fairest of thy feres,
 We pri'thee pass not on.

SONG

I

EVERY day hath its night:
 Every night its morn:
 Thorough dark and bright
 Winged hours are borne;
 Ah! welaway!
 Seasons flower and fade;
 Golden calm and storm
 Mingle day by day.
 There is no bright form
 Doth not cast a shade—
 Ah! welaway!

II

When we laugh, and our mirth
 Apes the happy vein,
 We're so kin to earth,
 Pleasaunce fathers pain—
 Ah! welaway!
 Madness laugheth loud:
 Laughter bringeth tears:
 Eyes are worn away
 Till the end of fears
 Cometh in the shroud,
 Ah! welaway!

III

All is change, woe or weal;
 Joy is Sorrow's brother;

¹ 'His crispe hair in ringis was yronne.'
 CHAUCER, *Knights Tale*.

Grief and gladness steal
 Symbols of each other:
 Ah! welaway!
 Larks in heaven's cope
 Sing: the culvers mourn
 All the livelong day.
 Be not all forlorn:
 Let us weep in hope—
 Ah! welaway!

HERO TO LEANDER

O go not yet, my love!
 The night is dark and vast;
 The white moon is hid in her heaven
 above,
 And the waves climb high and
 fast.
 O, kiss me, kiss me, once again,
 Lest thy kiss should be the last!
 O kiss me ere we part;
 Grow closer to my heart!
 My heart is warmer surely than the
 bosom of the main.
 O joy! O bliss of blisses!
 My heart of hearts art thou.
 Come bathe me with thy kisses,
 My eyelids and my brow.
 Hark how the wild rain hisses,
 And the loud sea roars below.

Thy heart beats through thy rosy
 limbs,
 So gladly doth it stir;
 Thine eye in drops of gladness
 swims.
 I have bathed thee with the plea-
 sant myrrh;
 Thy locks are dripping balm;
 Thou shalt not wander hence to-
 night,
 I'll stay thee with my kisses.
 To-night the roaring brine
 Will rend thy golden tresses;
 The ocean with the morrow light
 Will be both blue and calm;
 And the billow will embrace thee with
 a kiss as soft as mine.
 No Western odors wander
 On the black and moaning sea,
 And when thou art dead, Leander,
 My soul must follow thee!
 O go not yet, my love!
 Thy voice is sweet and low;

The deep salt wave breaks in above
 Those marble steps below.
 The turret-stairs are wet
 That lead into the sea.
 Leander! go not yet.
 The pleasant stars have set:
 O, go not, go not yet,
 Or I will follow thee!

THE MYSTIC

ANGELS have talked with him, and
 showed him thrones:
 Ye knew him not; he was not one of
 ye,
 Ye scorned him with an undiscerning
 scorn:
 Ye could not read the marvel in his
 eye,
 The still serene abstraction: he hath
 felt
 The vanities of after and before;
 Albeit, his spirit and his secret heart
 The stern experiences of converse
 lives,
 The linked woes of many a fiery
 change
 Had purified, and chastened, and made
 free.
 Always there stood before him, night
 and day,
 Of wayward vary-colored circum-
 stance
 The imperishable presences serene,
 Colossal, without form, or sense, or
 sound,
 Dim shadows but unwaning pres-
 ences
 Fourfaced to four corners of the sky:
 And yet again, three shadows, front-
 ing one,
 One forward, one respectant, three
 but one;
 And yet again, again and evermore,
 For the two first were not, but only
 seemed,
 One shadow in the midst of a great
 light,
 One reflex from eternity on time,
 One mighty countenance of perfect
 calm,
 Awful with most invariable eyes.
 For him the silent congregated hours,
 Daughters of time, divinely tall, be-
 neath

Severe and youthful brows, with shin-
 ing eyes
 Smiling a godlike smile (the innocent
 light
 Of earliest youth pierced through and
 through with all
 Keen knowledges of low-embowed
 eld)
 Upheld, and ever hold aloft the cloud
 Which droops low-hung on either gate
 of life,
 Both birth and death: he in the centre
 fixt,
 Saw far on each side through the
 grated gates
 Most pale and clear and lovely dis-
 tances.
 He often lying broad awake, and
 yet
 Remaining from the body, and apart
 In intellect and power and will, hath
 heard
 Time flowing in the middle of the
 night,
 And all things creeping to a day of
 doom.
 How could ye know him? Ye were
 yet within
 The narrower circle: he had wellnigh
 reached
 The last, which with a region of white
 flame,
 Pure without heat, into a larger air
 Upburning, and an ether of black blue,
 Investeth and ingirds all other lives.

THE GRASSHOPPER

I

VOICE of the summer wind,
 Joy of the summer plain,
 Life of the summer hours
 Carol clearly, bound along.
 No Tithon thou as poets feign
 (Shame fall 'em, they are deaf and
 blind),
 But an insect lithe and strong,
 Bowing the seeded summer flowers.
 Prove their falsehood and thy quar-
 rel,
 Vaulting on thine airy feet.
 Clap thy shielded sides and carol,
 Carol clearly, chirrup sweet.
 Thou art a mailed warrior in youth and
 strength complete:

Armed cap-a-pie
Full fair to see ;
Unknowing fear,
Undreading loss,
A gallant cavalier,
Sans peur et sans reproche,
In sunlight and in shadow,
The Bayard of the meadow.

II

I would dwell with thee,
Merry grasshopper,
Thou art so glad and free,
And as light as air ;
Thou hast no sorrow or tears,
Thou hast no compt of years,
No withered immortality,
But a short youth sunny and free.
Carol clearly, bound along,
Soon thy joy is over,
A summer of loud song,
And slumbers in the clover.
What hast thou to do with evil
In thine hour of love and revel,
In thy heat of summer pride,
Pushing the thick roots aside
Of the singing flowered grasses,
That brush thee with their silken
tresses ?
What hast thou to do with evil,
Shooting, singing, ever springing
In and out the emerald glooms,
Ever leaping, ever singing,
Lighting on the golden blooms ?

LOVE, PRIDE, AND FORGET-
FULNESS

ERE yet my heart was sweet Love's
tomb,
Love labored honey busily.
I was the hive, and Love the bee,
My heart the honeycomb.
One very dark and chilly night
Pride came beneath and held a light.

The cruel vapors went through all,
Sweet Love was withered in his cell :
Pride took Love's sweets, and by a
spell

Did change them into gall ;
And Memory, though fed by Pride,
Did wax so thin on gall,
Awhile she scarcely lived at all.
What marvel that she died ?

CHORUS

IN AN UNPUBLISHED DRAMA, WRIT-
TEN VERY EARLY

THE varied earth, the moving heaven,
The rapid waste of roving sea,
The fountain - pregnant mountains
riven

To shapes of wildest anarchy,
By secret fire and midnight storms
That wander round their windy
cones,

The subtle life, the countless forms
Of living things, the wondrous
tones

Of man and beast are full of
strange

Astonishment and boundless
change.

The day, the diamonded night,
The echo, feeble child of sound,
The heavy thunder's griding might,
The herald lightning's starry bound,
The vocal spring of bursting bloom,
The naked summer's glowing birth,
The troublous autumn's sallow gloom,
The hearhead winter paving earth

With sheeny white, are full of
strange

Astonishment and boundless
change.

Each sun which from the centre flings
Grand music and redundant fire,
The burning belts, the mighty rings,
The murm'rous planets' rolling
choir

The globe-filled arch that, cleaving air,
Lost in its own effulgence sleeps,
The lawless comets as they glare,
And thunder through the sapphire
deeps

In wayward strength, are full of
strange

Astonishment and boundless
change.

LOST HOPE

You cast to ground the hope which
once was mine :

But did the while your harsh decree
deplore,

Embalming with sweet tears the vacant shrine,
My heart, where Hope had been and was no more.

So on an oaken sprout
A goodly acorn grew;
But winds from heaven shook the acorn out,
And filled the cup with dew.

THE TEARS OF HEAVEN

HEAVEN weeps above the earth all night till morn,
In darkness weeps as all ashamed to weep,
Because the earth hath made her state forlorn
With self-wrought evil of unnumbered years,
And doth the fruit of her dishonor reap.
And all the day heaven gathers back her tears
Into her own blue eyes so clear and deep,
And showering down the glory of lightsome day,
Smiles on the Earth's worn brow to win her if she may.

LOVE AND SORROW

O MAIDEN, fresher than the first green leaf
With which the fearful springtide flecks the lea,
Weep not, Almeida, that I said to thee
That thou hast half my heart, for bitter grief
Doth hold the other half in sovranity.
Thou art my heart's sun in love's crystalline:
Yet on both sides at once thou canst not shine:
Thine is the bright side of my heart, and thine
My heart's day, but the shadow of my heart,
Issue of its own substance, my heart's night

Thou canst not lighten even with *thy* light,
All-powerful in beauty as thou art.
Almeida, if my heart were substanceless,
Then might thy rays pass through to the other side,
So swiftly, that they nowhere would abide,
But lose themselves in utter emptiness.
Half-light, half-shadow, let my spirit sleep;
They never learned to love who never knew to weep.

TO A LADY SLEEPING

O THOU whose fringed lids I gaze upon,
Through whose dim brain the wingéd dreams are borne,
Unroof the shrines of clearest vision,
In honor of the silver-fleckéd morn;
Long hath the white wave of the virgin light
Driven back the billow of the dreamful dark.
Thou all unwittingly prolongest night,
Though long ago listening the poiséd lark,
With eyes dropt downward through the blue serene,
Over heaven's parapet the angels lean.

SONNET

COULD I outwear my present state of woe
With one brief winter, and indue i' the spring
Hues of fresh youth, and mightily outgrow
The wan dark coil of faded suffering—
Forth in the pride of beauty issuing
A sheeny snake, the light of vernal bowers,
Moving his crest to all sweet plots of flowers
And watered valleys where the young birds sing;
Could I thus hope my lost delight's renewing,

I straightly would command the tears
to creep
From my charged lids; but inwardly
I weep;
Some vital heat as yet my heart is
wooing:
That to itself hath drawn the frozen
rain
From my cold eyes, and melted it
again.

SONNET

THOUGH Night hath climbed her peak
of highest noon,
And bitter blasts the screaming autumn
whirl,
All night through archways of the
bridgéd pearl,
And portals of pure silver, walks the
moon.
Walk on, my soul, nor crouch to
agony,
Turn cloud to light, and bitterness to
joy,
And dross to gold with glorious al-
chemy,
Basing thy throne above the world's
annoy.
Reign thou above the storms of sor-
row and ruth
That roar beneath; unshaken peace
hath won thee;
So shalt thou pierce the woven glooms
of truth;
So shall the blessing of the meek be
on thee;
So in thine hour of dawn, the body's
youth,
An honorable eld shall come upon thee.

SONNET

SHALL the hag Evil die with child of
Good,
Or propagate again her loathéd kind,
Thronging the cells of the diseased
mind,
Hateful with hanging cheeks, a with-
ered brood,
Though hourly pastured on the salient
blood?
Oh! that the wind which bloweth cold
or heat

Would shatter and o'erbear the brazen
beat
Of their broad vans, and in the soli-
tude
Of middle space confound them, and
blow back
Their wild cries down their cavern
throats, and slake
With points of blast-borne hail their
heated eyne!
So their wan limbs no more might
come between
The moon and the moon's reflex in
the night,
Nor blot with floating shades the solar
light.

SONNET

THE pallid thunder-stricken sigh for
gain,
Down an ideal stream they ever float,
And sailing on Pactolus in a boat,
Drown soul and sense, while wistfully
they strain
Weak eyes upon the glistening sands
that robe
The understream. The wise, could
he behold
Cathedraled caverns of thick-ribbéd
gold
And branching silvers of the central
globe,
Would marvel from so beautiful a
sight
How scorn and ruin, pain and hate
could flow:
But Hatred in a gold cave sits below;
Pleached with her hair, in mail of
argent light
Shot into gold, a snake her forehead
clips,
And skins the color from her trem-
bling lips.

LOVE

I

THOU, from the first, unborn, undying
Love,
Albeit we gaze not on thy glories
near,
Before the face of God didst breathe
and move,

Though night and pain and ruin and
death reign here.
Thou foldest, like a golden atmos-
phere,
The very throne of the eternal God:
Passing through thee the edicts of his
fear
Are mellowed into music, borne abroad
By the loud winds, though they up-
rend the sea,
Even from its central deeps: thine
empyre
Is over all; thou wilt not brook eclipse;
Thou goest and returnest to His lips
Like lightning: thou dost ever brood
above
The silence of all hearts, unutterable
Love.

II

To know thee is all wisdom, and old
age
Is but to know thee: dimly we behold
thee
Athwart the veils of evils which in-
fold thee.
We beat upon our aching hearts in
rage;
We cry for thee; we deem the world
thy tomb.
As dwellers in lone planets look upon
The mighty disk of their majestic sun,
Hollowed in awful chasms of wheeling
gloom,
Making their day dim, so we gaze on
thee.
Come, thou of many crowns, white-
robéd Love,
Oh! rend the veil in twain: all men
adore thee;
Heaven crieth after thee; earth wait-
eth for thee;
Breathe on thy wingéd throne, and it
shall move
In music and in light o'er land and sea.

III

And now—methinks I gaze upon
thee now,
As on a serpent in his agonies
Awe-stricken Indians; what time laid
low
And crushing the thick fragrant reeds
he lies,
When the new year warm-breathéd
on the Earth,

Waiting to light him with her purple
skies,
Calls to him by the fountain to uprise.
Already with the pangs of a new birth
Strain the hot spheres of his convulséd
eyes,
And in his writhings awful hues begin
To wander down his sable-sheeny
sides,
Like light on troubled waters: from
within
Anon he rusheth forth with merry din,
And in him light and joy and strength
abides;
And from his brows a crown of living
light
Looks through the thick-stemmed
woods by day and night.

ENGLISH WAR-SONG

Who fears to die? Who fears to die?
Is there any here who fears to die?
He shall find what he fears; and none
shall grieve
For the man who fears to die;
But the withering scorn of the many
shall cleave
To the man who fears to die.

CHORUS.

Shout for England!
Ho! for England!
George for England!
Merry England!
England for aye!

The hollow at heart shall crouch
forlorn,
He shall eat the bread of common
scorn;
It shall be steeped in the salt, salt
tear,
Shall be steeped in his own salt
tear:
Far better, far better he never were
born
Than to shame merry England here.
CHO.—Shout for England! etc.

There standeth our ancient enemy;
Hark! he shouteth—the ancient
enemy!
On the ridge of the hill his banners
rise;

They stream like fire in the skies;
Hold up the Lion of England on high
Till it dazzle and blind his eyes.

CHO. — Shout for England! etc.

Come along! we alone of the earth
are free;

The child in our cradles is bolder
than he;

For where is the heart and strength
of slaves?

Oh! where is the strength of slaves?
He is weak! we are strong: he a
slave, we are free;

Come along! we will dig their
graves.

CHO. — Shout for England! etc.

There standeth our ancient enemy;
Will he dare to battle with the free?
Spur along! spur amain! charge to
the fight:

Charge! charge to the fight!
Hold up the Lion of England on high!
Shout for God and our right!

CHO. — Shout for England! etc.

NATIONAL SONG

THERE is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be;
There are no hearts like English hearts,
Such hearts of oak as they be.
There is no land like England
Where'er the light of day be;
There are no men like Englishmen,
So tall and bold as they be.

CHORUS.

For the French the Pope may thrive
'em.

For the devil a whit we heed 'em:
As for the French, God speed 'em
Unto their heart's desire,
And the merry devil drive 'em
Through the water and the fire.

FULL CHORUS.

Our glory is our freedom,
We lord it o'er the sea;
We are the sons of freedom,
We are free.

There is no land like England,
Where'er the light of day be;

There are no wives like English wives,
So fair and chaste as they be.
There is no land like England,
Where'er the light of day be;
There are no maids like English maids,
So beautiful as they be.

CHO. — For the French, etc.

DUALISMS

Two bees within a crystal flowerbell
rockéd,

Hum a love-lay to the west-wind at
noontide.

Both alike, they buzz together,
Both alike, they hum together,
Through and through the flowered
heather.

Where in a creeping cove the wave
unshockéd

Lays itself calm and ~~side~~ side.

Over a stream two birds of glancing
feather

Do woo each other, carolling to-
gether.

Both alike, they glide together,
Side by side;

Both alike, they sing together,
Arching blue-glosséd necks beneath
the purple weather.

Two children lovelier than Love adown
the lea are singing,

As they gambol, lily-garlands ever
stringing:

Both in bloom-white silk are
frockéd:

Like, unlike, they roam together
Under a summer vault of golden
weather:

Like, unlike, they sing together
Side by side,

Mid-May's darling golden-lockéd,
Summer's tanling diamond-eyed.

THE SEA FAIRIES¹

SLOW sailed the weary mariners, and
saw

Between the green brink and the run-
ning foam

White limbs unrobéd in a crystal
air,

¹ Original form. See page 18.

Sweet faces, rounded arms, and bosoms
 prest
 To little harps of gold: and while they
 mused,
 Whispering to each other half in
 fear,
 Shrill music reached them on the mid-
 dle sea.

SONG.

Whither away, whither away,
 whither away? Fly no more:
 Whither away wi' the singing sail?
 whither away wi' the oar?
 Whither away from the high green
 field and the happy blossoming
 shore?
 Weary mariners, hither away,
 One and all, one and all,
 Weary mariners, come and play;
 We will sing to you all the day;
 Furl the sail and the foam will
 fall
 From the prow! One and all,
 Furl the sail! Drop the oar!
 Leap ashore,
 Know danger and trouble and toil
 no more.
 Whither away wi' the sail and the
 oar?

Drop the oar,
 Leap ashore,
 Fly no more!
 Whither away wi' the sail? whither
 away wi' the oar?
 Day and night to the billow the
 fountain calls:
 Down shower the gambolling water-
 falls
 From wandering over the lea;
 They freshen the silvery-crimson
 shells,
 And thick with white bells the
 clover-hill swells
 High over the full-toned sea.
 Merrily carol the revelling gales
 Over the islands free:
 From the green seabanks the rose
 down-trails
 To the happy brimmed sea.

Come hither, come hither and be our
 lords,
 For merry brides are we:

We will kiss sweet kisses, and speak
 sweet words.
 Oh listen, listen, your eyes shall
 glisten
 With pleasure and love and rev-
 elry;
 Oh listen, listen, your eyes shall
 glisten,
 When the clear sharp twang of the
 golden chords
 Runs up the ridged sea.
 Ye will not find so happy a shore,
 Weary mariners! all the world
 o'er;
 Oh! fly no more!
 Harken ye, harken ye, sorrow shall
 darken ye,
 Danger and trouble and toil no
 more;
 Whither away?
 Drop the oar;
 Hither away,
 Leap ashore;
 Oh fly no more — no more:
 Whither away, whither away, whither
 away with the sail and the
 oar?

Οἱ πέοντες

I

ALL thoughts, all creeds, all dreams
 are true,
 All visions wild and strange;
 Man is the measure of all truth
 Unto himself. All truth is change.
 All men do walk in sleep, and all
 Have faith in that they dream:
 For all things are as they seem to
 all,
 And all things flow like a stream.

II

There is no rest, no calm, no pause,
 Nor good nor ill, nor light nor
 shade,
 Nor essence nor eternal laws:
 For nothing is, but all is made.
 But if I dream that all these are,
 They are to me for that I dream;
 For all things are as they seem to
 all
 And all things flow like a stream.
 Argal — this very opinion is only true
 relatively to the flowing philosophers.

SONNET

O BEAUTY, passing beauty ! sweetest
Sweet !

How canst thou let me waste my
youth in sighs ?

I only ask to sit beside thy feet.

Thou knowest I dare not look into
thine eyes.

Might I but kiss thy hand ! I dare not
fold

My arms about thee — scarcely dare
to speak.

And nothing seems to me so wild and
bold,

As with one kiss to touch thy
blesséd cheek.

Methinks if I should kiss thee, no con-
trol

Within the thrilling brain could
keep afloat

The subtle spirit. Even while I
spoke,

The bare word KISS hath made my
inner soul

To tremble like a lutestring, ere
the note

Hath melted in the silence that it
broke.

THE HESPERIDES

"Hesperus and his daughters three,
That sing about the golden tree."
Comus.

THE North-wind fall'n, in the new-
starréd night

Zidonian Hanno, voyaging beyond

The hoary promontory of Solóè

Past Thymiatèrion, in calméd bays,

Between the southern and the western
Horn,

Heard neither warbling of the night-
ingale,

Nor melody of the Libyan lotus flute
Blown seaward from the shore ; but

from a slope

That ran bloom-bright into the Atlan-
tic blue,

Beneath a highland leaning down a
weight

Of cliffs, and zoned below with cedar
shade,

Came voices, like the voices in a
dream,
Continuous, till he reached the outer
sea.

SONG

I

The golden apple, the golden apple,
the hallowed fruit,

Guard it well, guard it warily,

Singing airily,

Standing about the charmed root.

Round about all is mute,

As the snow-field on the mountain-
peaks,

As the sand-field at the mountain-foot.

Crocodiles in briny creeks

Sleep and stir not : all is mute.

If ye sing not, if ye make false mea-
sure,

We shall lose eternal pleasure,

Worth eternal want of rest.

Laugh not loudly : watch the treasure

Of the wisdom of the West.

In a corner wisdom whispers. Five
and three

(Let it not be preached abroad) make
an awful mystery.

For the blossom unto threefold music
bloweth ;

Evermore it is born anew ;

And the sap to threefold music flow-
eth,

From the root

Drawn in the dark,

Up to the fruit,

Creeping under the fragrant bark,

Liquid gold, honeysweet, thro' and
thro'.

Keen-eyed Sisters, singing airily,

Looking warily

Every way,

Guard the apple night and day,

Lest one from the East come and take
it away.

II

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch,
watch, ever and aye,

Looking under silver hair with a sil-
ver eye.

Father, twinkle not thy steadfast
sight ;

Kingdoms lapse, and climates change,
and races die ;

Honor comes with mystery ;
 Hoarded wisdom brings delight.
 Number, tell them over and number
 How many the mystic fruit-tree holds
 Lest the red-combed dragon slumber
 Rolled together in purple folds.
 Look to him, father, lest he wink, and
 the golden apple be stol'n away,
 For his ancient heart is drunk with
 overwatchings night and day,
 Round about the hallowed fruit-tree
 curled —
 Sing away, sing aloud evermore in the
 wind, without stop,
 Lest his scaled eyelid drop,
 For he is older than the world.
 If he waken, we waken,
 Rapidly levelling eager eyes.
 If he sleep, we sleep,
 Dropping the eyelid over the eyes.
 If the golden apple be taken,
 The world will be overwise.
 Five links, a golden chain, are we,
 Hesper, the dragon, and sisters three,
 Bound about the golden tree.

III

Father Hesper, Father Hesper, watch,
 watch, night and day,
 Lest the old wound of the world be
 healed,
 The glory unsealed,
 The golden apple stolén away,
 And the ancient secret revealed.
 Look from west to east along :
 Father, old Himala weakens, Cau-
 casus is bold and strong.
 Wandering waters unto wandering
 waters call ;
 Let them clash together, foam and fall.
 Out of watchings, out of wiles,
 Comes the bliss of secret smiles.
 All things are not told to all.
 Half-round the mantling night is
 drawn,
 Purple fringed with even and dawn.
 Hesper hateth Phosphor, evening hat-
 eth morn.

IV

Every flower and every fruit the redo-
 lent breath
 Of this warm sea-wind ripeneth,
 Arching the billow in his sleep ;
 But the land-wind wandereth,
 Broken by the highland-steep,

Two streams upon the violet deep ;
 For the western sun and the western
 star,
 And the low west-wind, breathing
 afar,
 The end of day and beginning of night
 Make the apple holy and bright ;
 Holy and bright, round and full,
 bright and blest,
 Mellowed in a land of rest ;
 Watch it warily day and night ;
 All good things are in the west.
 Till mid noon the cool east light
 Is shut out by the tall hillbrow ;
 But when the full-faced sunset yel-
 lowly
 Stays on the flowering arch of the
 bough,
 The luscious fruitage clustereth mel-
 lowly,
 Golden-kernelled, golden-cored,
 Sunset-ripened above on the tree.
 The world is wasted with fire and
 sword,
 But the apple of gold hangs over the
 sea.
 Five links, a golden chain are we,
 Hesper, the dragon, and sisters three,
 Daughters three,
 Bound about
 The gnarled bole of the charmed tree.
 The golden apple, the golden apple,
 the hallowed fruit,
 Guard it well, guard it warily,
 Watch it warily,
 Singing airily,
 Standing about the charmed root.

ROSALIND¹

AUTHOR'S NOTE. — Perhaps the follow-
 ing lines may be allowed to stand as a sepa-
 rate poem; originally they made part of
 the text, where they were manifestly super-
 fluous.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
 Bold, subtle, careless Rosalind,
 Is one of those who know no strife
 Of inward woe or outward fear ;
 To whom the slope and stream of
 Life,
 The life before, the life behind,
 In the ear, from far and near,

¹ This poem (see p. 28) has been restored,
 but *without* the Author's Note.

Chimeth musically clear.
 My falcon-hearted Rosalind,
 Full-sailed before a vigorous wind,
 Is one of those who cannot weep
 For others' woes, but overleap
 All the petty shocks and fears.
 That trouble life in early years,
 With a flash of frolic scorn
 And keen delight, that never falls
 Away from freshness, self-upborne
 With such gladness as, whenever
 The fresh-flushing springtime calls
 To the flooding waters cool,
 Young fishes, on an April morn,
 Up and down a rapid river,
 Leap the little waterfalls
 That sing into the pebbled pool.
 My happy falcon, Rosalind,
 Hath daring fancies of her own,
 Fresh as the dawn before the day,
 Fresh as the early sea-smell blown
 Through vineyards from an inland bay.

My Rosalind, my Rosalind,
 Because no shadow on you falls,
 Think you hearts are tennisballs
 To play with, wanton Rosalind?

SONG

Who can say
 Why To-day
 To-morrow will be yesterday?
 Who can tell
 Why to smell
 The violet recalls the dewy prime
 Of youth and buried time?
 The cause is nowhere found in rhyme.

SONNET

WRITTEN ON HEARING OF THE OUT-
 BREAK OF THE POLISH INSURREC-
 TION

Blow ye the trumpet, gather from
 afar
 The hosts to battle: be not bought
 and sold.
 Arise, brave Poles, the boldest of the
 bold;
 Break through your iron shackles —
 fling them far.
 O for those days of Piast, ere the Czar

Grew to his strength among his des-
 erts cold;
 When even to Moscow's cupolas were
 rolled
 The growing murmurs of the Polish
 war!
 Now must your noble anger blaze out
 more
 Than when from Sobieski, clan by clan,
 The Moslem myriads fell, and fled be-
 fore —
 Than when Zamoysky smote the Tar-
 tar Khan;
 Than earlier, when on the Baltic shore
 Boleslas drove the Pomeranian.

O DARLING ROOM

I

O DARLING room, my heart's delight,
 Dear room, the apple of my sight,
 With thy two couches soft and white,
 There is no room so exquisite,
 No little room so warm and bright,
 Wherein to read, wherein to write.

II

For I the Nonnenwerth have seen,
 And Oberwinter's vineyards green,
 Musical Lurlei; and between
 The hills to Bingen have I been,
 Bingen in Darmstadt, where the
 Rhene
 Curves toward Mentz, a woody scene.

III

Yet never did there meet my sight,
 In any town to left or right,
 A little room so exquisite,
 With two such couches soft and white,
 Not any room so warm and bright,
 Wherein to read, wherein to write.

TO CHRISTOPHER NORTH

You did late review my lays,
 Crusty Christopher;
 You did mingle blame and praise,
 Rusty Christopher.
 When I learnt from whom it came,
 I forgave you all the blame,
 Musty Christopher;
 I could *not* forgive the praise,
 Fusty Christopher.

ON CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

THEREFORE your Halls, your ancient
Colleges,
Your portals statued with old kings
and queens,
Your gardens, myriad-volumed libra-
ries,
Wax-lighted chapels, and rich carven
screens,
Your doctors and your proctors, and
your deans
Shall not avail you, when the Day-
beam sports
New-risen o'er awaken'd Albion —
No!
Nor yet your solemn organ-pipes that
blow
Melodious thunders thro' your vacant
courts
At morn and eve — because your man-
ner sorts
Not with this age wherefrom ye stand
apart —
Because the lips of little children
preach
Against you, you that do profess to
teach
And teach us nothing, feeding not the
heart.

NO MORE¹

O SAD *No More!* O sweet *No
More!*
O strange *No More!*
By a mossed brookbank on a stone
I smelt a wildweed flower alone;
There was a ringing in my ears,
And both my eyes gushed out with
tears.
Surely all pleasant things had gone
before,
Low-buried fathom deep beneath with
thee, NO MORE!

ANACREONTICS¹

WITH roses musky-breathed,
And drooping daffodilly,
And silver-leaved lily,
And ivy darkly-wreathed,
I wove a crown before her,

For her I love so dearly,
A garland for Lenora.
With a silken cord I bound it.
Lenora, laughing clearly
A light and thrilling laughter,
About her forehead wound it,
And loved me ever after.

A FRAGMENT¹

WHERE is the Giant of the Sun, which
stood
In the midnight the glory of old
Rhodes,
A perfect Idol with profulgent brows
Far-sheening down the purple seas to
those
Who sailed from Mizraim underneath
the star
Named of the Dragon — and between
whose limbs
Of brassy vastness broad-blown Argo-
sies
Drove into haven? Yet endure un-
scathed
Of changeful cycles the great Pyra-
mids
Broad-based amid the fleeting sands,
and sloped
Into the slumberous summer noon;
but where,
Mysterious Egypt, are thine obelisks
Graven with gorgeous emblems undis-
cerned?
Thy placid Sphinxes brooding o'er the
Nile?
Thy shadowing Idols in the solitudes,
Awful Memnonian countenances calm
Looking athwart the burning flats,
far off
Seen by the high-necked camel on the
verge
Journeying southward? Where are
thy monuments
Piled by the strong and sunborn Ana-
kim
Over their crowned brethren ON and
OPH?
Thy Memnon when his peaceful lips
are kist
With earliest rays, that from his mo-
ther's eyes
Flow over the Arabian bay, no more

¹From 'The Geni, a Literary Annual,' for 1831.

Breathes low into the charmed ears of
 morn
 Clear melody flattering the crisped
 Nile
 By columned Thebes. Old Memphis
 hath gone down:
 The Pharaohs are no more: somewhere
 in death
 They sleep with staring eyes and gilded
 lips,
 Wrapped round with spiced cerements
 in old grotts
 Rock-hewn and sealed for ever.

SONNET¹

ME my own fate to lasting sorrow
 doometh:
 Thy woes are birds of passage, tran-
 sitory:
 Thy spirit, circled with a living
 glory,
 In summer still a summer joy resum-
 eth.
 Alone my hopeless melancholy gloom-
 eth,
 Like a lone cypress, through the
 twilight hoary,
 From an old garden where no flower
 bloometh,
 One cypress on an island promon-
 tory.
 But yet my lonely spirit follows thine,
 As round the rolling earth night fol-
 lows day:
 But yet thy lights on my horizon
 shine
 Into my night, when thou art far
 away.
 I am so dark, alas! and thou so bright,
 When we two meet there's never per-
 fect light.

SONNET²

CHECK every outflash, every ruder
 sally
 Of thought and speech; speak low,
 and give up wholly
 Thy spirit to mild-minded Melan-
 choly;

¹ From 'Friendship's Offering,' for 1832.² From 'The Englishman's Magazine,' for August, 1831.

This is the place. Through yonder
 poplar alley
 Below the blue-green river windeth
 slowly;
 But in the middle of the sombre valley
 The crisped waters whisper musically,
 And all the haunted place is dark
 and holy.
 The nightingale, with long and low
 preamble,
 Warbled from yonder knoll of
 solemn larches,
 And in and out the woodbine's
 flowery arches
 The summer midges wove their wan
 ton gambol,
 And all the white-stemmed pine
 wood slept above—
 When in this valley first I told my
 love.

SONNET¹

THERE are three things which fill my
 heart with sighs,
 And steep my soul in laughter (when
 I view
 Fair maiden-forms moving like melo-
 dies)—
 Dimples, roselsips, and eyes of any hue.
 There are three things beneath the
 blessed skies
 For which I live—black eyes and
 brown and blue:
 I hold them all most dear; but oh!
 black eyes,
 I live and die, and only die in you.
 Of late such eyes looked at me—while
 I mused,
 At sunset, underneath a shadowy
 plane,
 In old Bayona nigh the southern sea—
 From an half-open lattice looked at me.
 I saw no more—only those eyes—con-
 fused
 And dazzled to the heart with glorious
 pain.

THE SKIPPING-ROPE

SURE never yet was antelope
 Could skip so lightly by.

¹ From 'The Yorkshire Literary Annual,' 1832.

Stand off, or else my skipping-rope
Will hit you in the eye.
How lightly whirls the skipping-rope !
How fairy-like you fly !
Go, get you gone, you muse and
mope —
I hate that silly sigh.
Nay, dearest, teach me how to hope,
Or tell me how to die.
There, take it, take my skipping-rope,
And hang yourself thereby.

THE NEW TIMON AND THE POETS¹

WE know him, out of Shakespeare's
art,
And those fine curses which he
spoke ;
The old Timon, with his noble heart,
That, strongly loathing, greatly
broke.

So died the Old : here comes the New.
Regard him : a familiar face :
(I thought we knew him : What, it's
you,
The padded man — that wears the
stays —

Who killed the girls and thrilled the
boys
With dandy pathos when you wrote !
A Lion, you, that made a noise,
And shook a mane *en papillotes*.

And once you tried the Muses too ;
You failed, Sir : therefore now you
turn,
To fall on those who are to you
As Captain is to Subaltern.

But men of long-enduring hopes,
And careless what this hour may
bring,
Can pardon little would-be POPES
And BRUMMELS, when they try to
sting.

An Artist, Sir, should rest in Art,
And waive a little of his claim ;
To have the deep Poetic heart
Is more than all poetic fame.

¹ Published in 'Punch,' February 28,
1846, signed 'Alcibiades.'

But you, Sir, you are hard to please ;
You never look but half content ;
Nor like a gentleman at ease,
With moral breadth of temperament.

And what with spites and what with
fears,
You cannot let a body be :
It's always ringing in your ears,
'They call this man as good as *me*.'

What profits now to understand
The merits of a spotless shirt —
A dapper boot — a little hand —
If half the little soul is dirt ?

You talk of tinsel ! why, we see
The old mark of rouge upon your
cheeks.
You prate of Nature ! you are he
That spilt his life about the cliques.

A TIMON you ! Nay, nay, for shame :
It looks too arrogant a jest —
The fierce old man — to take his name,
You bandbox. Off, and let him rest.

LINES¹

HERE often, when a child I lay re-
clined,
I took delight in this locality.
Here stood the infant Ilion of the
mind,
And here the Grecian ships did seem
to be.
And here again I come, and only find
The drain-cut levels of the marshy
lea, —
Gray sea-banks and pale sunsets, —
dreary wind,
Dim shores, dense rains, and heavy-
clouded sea !

STANZAS²

WHAT time I wasted youthful hours,
One of the shining wingéd powers,
Show'd me vast cliffs with crown of
towers.

¹ From 'The Manchester Athenæum
Album,' 1850.

² Contributed to 'The Keepsake,' an il-
lustrated annual, 1851.

As towards the gracious light I
bow'd,
They seem'd high palaces and proud,
Hid now and then with sliding
cloud.

He said, 'The labor is not small;
Yet winds the pathway free to all:—
Take care thou dost not fear to
fall!'

BRITONS, GUARD YOUR OWN¹

Rise, Britons, rise, if manhood be not
dead;

The world's last tempest darkens over-
head;

The Pope has bless'd him;
The Church caress'd him;
He triumphs; maybe we shall stand
alone.

Britons, guard your own.

His ruthless host is bought with plun-
der'd gold,
By lying priests the peasants' votes
controil'd.

All freedom vanish'd,
The true men banish'd,
He triumphs; maybe we shall stand
alone.

Britons, guard your own.

Peace-lovers we—sweet Peace we all
desire—

Peace-lovers we—but who can trust a
liar?—

Peace-lovers, haters
Of shameless traitors,
We hate not France, but this man's
heart of stone.

Britons, guard your own.

We hate not France, but France has
lost her voice.

This man is France, the man they call
her choice.

By tricks and spying,
By craft and lying,
And murder was her freedom over-
thrown.

Britons, guard your own.

¹ From 'The Examiner,' January 31, 1852,
and signed 'Merlin.'

'Vive l'Empereur' may follow by and
by;

'God save the Queen' is here a truer
cry.

God save the Nation,
The toleration,
And the free speech that makes a Bri-
ton known.

Britons, guard your own.

Rome's dearest daughter now is cap-
tive France,

The Jesuit laughs, and reckoning on
his chance,

Would, unrelenting,
Kill all dissenting,
Till we were left to fight for truth
alone.

Britons, guard your own.

Call home your ships across Biscayan
tides,

To blow the battle from their oaken
sides.

Why waste they yonder
Their idle thunder?

Why stay they there to guard a foreign
throne?

Seamen, guard your own.

We were the best of marksmen long
ago,

We won old battles with our strength,
the bow.

Now practice, yeomen,
Like those bowmen,

Till your balls fly as their true shafts
have flown.

Yeomen, guard your own.

His soldier-ridden Highness might in-
cline

To take Sardinia, Belgium, or the
Rhine:

Shall we stand idle,
Nor seek to bridle

His rude aggressions, till we stand
alone?

Make their cause your own.

Should he land here, and for one hour
prevail,

There must no man go back to bear
the tale:

No man to bear it—
Swear it! we swear it!

Although we fight the banded world
alone,
We swear to guard our own.

ADDITIONAL VERSES¹

TO 'GOD SAVE THE QUEEN.'

God bless our Prince and Bride!
God keep their lands allied,
God save the Queen!
Clothe them with righteousness,
Crown them with happiness,
Them with all blessings bless,
God save the Queen!

Fair fall this hallow'd hour,
Farewell, our England's flower,
God save the Queen!
Farewell, first rose of May!
Let both the peoples say,
God bless thy marriage-day,
God bless the Queen!

THE WAR²

THERE is a sound of thunder afar,
Storm in the South that darkens the
day!

Storm of battle and thunder of war!
Well if it do not roll our way.
Form! form! Riflemen, form!
Ready, be ready to meet the
storm!
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen,
form!

Be not deaf to the sound that warns!
Be not gull'd by a despot's plea!
Are figs of thistles, or grapes of
thorns?

How should a despot set men Free?
Form! form! Riflemen, form!
Ready, be ready to meet the
storm!
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen,
form!

Let your reforms for a moment go!
Look to your butts, and take good
aims!

¹ Written for the marriage of the Princess
Royal of England with the Crown Prince
of Prussia, January 25, 1858.

² From 'The London Times,' May 9, 1859.

Better a rotten borough or so
Than a rotten fleet or a city in
flames!

Form! form! Riflemen, form!
Ready, be ready to meet the
storm!
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen,
form!

Form, be ready to do or die!
Form in Freedom's name and the
Queen's!

True that we have a faithful ally,
But only the devil can tell what he
means.

Form! form! Riflemen, form!
Ready, be ready to meet the
storm!
Riflemen, Riflemen, Riflemen,
form!

THE RINGLET

'Your ringlets, your ringlets,
That look so golden-gay,
If you will give me one, but one,
To kiss it night and day,
Then never chilling touch of Time
Will turn it silver-gray;
And then shall I know it is all true
gold
To flame and sparkle and stream as of
old,
Till all the comets in heaven are
cold,
And all her stars decay.'
'Then take it, love, and put it
by;
This cannot change, nor yet can I.'

2

'My ringlet, my ringlet,
That art so golden-gay,
Now never chilling touch of Time
Can turn thee silver-gray;
And a lad may wink, and a girl may
hint,
And a fool may say his say;
For my doubts and fears were all
amiss,
And I swear henceforth by this and
this,
That a doubt will only come for a
kiss,
And a fear to be kiss'd away.'

'Then kiss it, love, and put it by;
If this can change, why so can I.'

II

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,
I kiss'd you night and day,
And Ringlet, O Ringlet,
You still are golden-gay,
But Ringlet, O Ringlet,
You should be silver-gray:
For what is this which now I'm
told,
I that took you for true gold,
Sho that gave you's bought and
sold,
Sold, sold.

2

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,
She blush'd a rosy red,
When Ringlet, O Ringlet,
She clipt you from her head,
And Ringlet, O Ringlet,
She gave you me, and said,
'Come, kiss it, love, and put it by;
If this can change, why so can I.'
O fie, you golden nothing, fie,
You golden lie.

8

O Ringlet, O Ringlet,
I count you much to blame
For Ringlet, O Ringlet,
You put me much to shame,
So Ringlet, O Ringlet,
I doom you to the flame.
For what is this which now I learn
Has given all my faith a turn?
Burn, you glossy heretic, burn,
Burn, burn.

LINES¹

Long as the heart beats life within her
breast,
Thy child will bless thee, guardian
mother mild,
And far away thy memory will be
blest
By children of the children of thy
child.

¹ Written in 1864, at the request of the Queen, for inscription on the statue of the Duchess of Kent at Frogmore; printed in 'The Court Journal,' March 19, 1864.

1865-1866¹

I stood on a tower in the wet,
And New Year and Old Year met,
And winds were roaring and blowing.
And I said, 'O years that meet in
tears,
Have ye aught that is worth the know-
ing?
Science enough and exploring,
Wanderers coming and going,
Matter enough for deploring,
But aught that is worth the know-
ing?'
Seas at my feet were flowing,
Waves on the shingle pouring,
Old Year roaring and blowing,
And New Year blowing and roaring.

STANZA²

Not he that breaks the dams, but
he
That thro' the channels of the State
Convoys the people's wish, is great;
His name is pure, his fame is free.

COMPROMISE³

STEERSMAN, be not precipitate in thy
act
Of steering, for the river here, my
friend,
Parts in two channels, moving to
one end,
This goes straight forward to the cat-
aract,
That streams about the bend;
But tho' the cataract seem the nearer
way,
Whate'er the crowd on either bank
may say,
Take thou the bend, 't will save thee
many a day.

¹ 'Good Words,' March, 1868.

² Contributed to the 'Shakespearean Show Book,' printed in March, 1864, for a fair got up for the benefit of the Chelsea Hospital for Women.

³ Addressed to Mr. Gladstone, then Prime Minister, in November, 1864, when the Franchise Bill was being discussed in the House of Lords; and afterwards printed in the 'Pall Mall Gazette.'

EXPERIMENT IN SAPPHIC
METRE ¹

Faded every violet, all the roses;
Gone the glorious promise, and the
victim
Broken in the anger of Aphrodite
Yields to the victor.

¹ Contributed to Professor Jebb's 'Primer
of Greek Literature,' 1877.

STANZA ¹

We lost you for how long a time,
True Pearl of our poetic prime!
We found you, and you gleam re-
set
In Britain's lyric coronet.

¹ Prefatory, in 1891, to 'Pearl,' an Eng-
lish poem of the 14th century, edited by
Mr. Israel Gollancz.

INDEXES

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

A city clerk, but gently born and bred, 327.
 Act first, this Earth, a stage so gloom'd with woe, 693.
 Again at Christmas did we weave, 239.
 A garden here — May breath and bloom of spring, 772.
 A happy lover who has come, 220.
 Ah God! the petty fools of rhyme, 343.
 Airy, fairy Lillian, 7.
 All along the valley, stream that flashest white, 340.
 All thoughts, all creeds, all dreams are true, 938.
 Altho' I be the basest of mankind, 105.
 And all is well, tho' faith and form, 256.
 And was the day of my delight, 225.
 And Willie, my eldest-born, is gone, you say, little Anne? 334.
 Angels have talked with him, and showed him thrones, 932.
 A plague upon the people fell, 348.
 Are you sleeping? have you forgotten? do not sleep, my sister dear, 632.
 A rose, but one, none other rose had I, 536.
 Artemis, Artemis, hear us, O Mother, hear us, and bless us, 893.
 Ask me no more: the wind may draw the sea, 206.
 A spirit haunts the year's last hours, 16.
 As sometimes in a dead man's face, 238.
 As thro' the land at eve we went, 163.
 A still small voice spake unto me, 37.
 A storm was coming, but the winds were still, 468.
 As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood, 20.
 At Flores in the Azores Sir Richard Grenville lay, 584.
 At Francis Allen's on the Christmas-eve, 83.
 Athelstan King, 613.
 A thousand summers are the time of Christ, 628.
 At times our Britain cannot rest, 669.
 Ay, ay, O, ay — the winds that bend the brier! 553.
 Babble in bower, 347.
 Banner of England, not for a season, O banner of Britain, hast thou, 597.
 'Beat, little heart — I give you this and this,' 688.
 Beat upon mine, little heart! beat, beat! 600.
 Beautiful city, the centre and crater of European confusion, 693.
 Below the thunders of the upper deep, 7.
 Be near me when my light is low, 232.
 Be thou a-gawin' to the long barn? 900.
 Blow trumpet, for the world is white with May, 397.
 Blow ye the trumpet, gather from afar, 941.
 Break, break, break, 153.
 Brooks, for they call'd you so that knew you best, 611.
 Bury the Great Duke, 288.
 By night we linger'd on the lawn, 245.

Calm is the morn without a sound, 221.
 Caress'd or chidden by the slender hand, 31.
 Chains, my good lord! in your raised brows I read, 603.
 Check every outflash, every ruder sally, 943.
 Clear-headed friend, whose joyful scorn, 10.
 Clearly the blue river chimes in its flowing, 4.
 Come down, O maid, from yonder mountain height, 210.
 Come not, when I am dead, 147.
 Come, when no graver cares employ, 287.
 Comrades, leave me here a little, while as yet 't is early morn, 120.
 Contemplate all this work of Time, 254.
 Could I have said while he was here, 239.
 Could I outwear my present state of woe, 934.
 Could we forget the widow'd hour, 229.
 'Courage!' he said, and pointed toward the land, 65.
 Dagonet, the fool, whom Gawain in his mood, 540.
 Dainty little maiden, whither would you wander, 347.
 Dark house, by which once more I stand, 219.
 Dead! 643.
 Dead mountain flowers, 878.
 Dead Princess, living Power, if that which lived, 596.
 Dear friend, far off, my lost desire, 257.
 Dear, near and true, — no truer Time himself, 342.
 Deep on the convent-roof the snows, 134.
 Dip down upon the northern shore, 240.
 Doors, where my heart was used to beat, 254.
 Doesn't thou 'ear my 'erese's legs, as they canters away, 339.
 Dost thou look back on what hath been, 235.
 Do we indeed desire the dead, 232.
 Dust are our frames; and, gilded dust, our pride, 312.
 Elaine the fair, Elaine the lovable, 487.
 Ere yet my heart was sweet Love's tomb, 933.
 Every day hath its night, 931.
 Eyes not down-dropt nor over-bright, but fed, 8.
 Faded every violet, all the roses, 948.
 Faint as a climate-changing bird that flies, 661.
 Fair is her cottage in its place, 341.
 Fair ship, that from the Italian shore, 220.
 Fair things are slow to fade away, 661.
 Farewell, Macready, since to-night we part, 658.
 Farewell, whose like on earth I shall not find, 694.
 Fifty times the rose has flower'd and faded, 660.
 First pledge our Queen this solemn night, 646.
 Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea, 146.
 Flower in the crannied wall, 351.
 Free love — free field — we love but while we may, 545.
 From art, from nature, from the schools, 232.

From noiseful arms, and acts of prowess done,
513.

Full knee-deep lies the winter snow, 76.

Gee oop! who! Gee oop! who! 911.

Glory of warrior, glory of orator, glory of song,
349.

God bless our Prince and Bride! 946.

Golden-hair'd Ally whose name is one with mine,
577.

Half a league, half a league, 292.

Hallowed be Thy name — Hallelulah! 611.

Hapless doom of woman happy in betrothing!
763.

Heart-affluence in discursive talk, 251.

Heaven weeps above the earth all night till
morn, 934.

He clasps the crag with crooked hands, 146.

'He is fled — I wish him dead —,' 678.

Helen's Tower, here I stand, 646.

He past, a soul of nobler tone, 234.

Her arms across her breast she laid, 147.

Here by this brook we parted, I to the East,
281.

Here far away, seen from the topmost cliff, 361.

Here, it is here, the close of the year, 348.

Here often, when a child I lay reclined, 944.

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer, 227.

He rose at dawn and, fired with hope, 341.

Her, that yer Honor was spakin' to? Whin,
yer Honor? last year —, 634.

He tasted love with half his mind, 244.

He that only rules by terror, 142.

He thought to quell the stubborn hearts of oak,
30.

Hide me, mother! my fathers belong'd to the
church of old, 621.

High wisdom, holds my wisdom less, 252.

His eyes in eclipse, 929.

'His friends would praise him, I believe 'em,'
711.

Home they brought her warrior dead, 199.

How fares it with the happy dead, 230.

How long, O God, shall men be ridden down,
31.

How many a father have I seen, 232.

How pure at heart and sound in head, 245.

I am any man's suitor, 929.

I built my soul a lordly pleasure-house, 54.

I cannot love thee as I ought, 232.

I cannot see the features right, 236.

I climb the hill: from end to end, 248.

I come from haunts of coot and hern, 282.

I dream'd there would be Spring no more, 236.

I envy not in any moods, 226.

If any vague desire should rise, 239.

If any vision should reveal, 245.

If, in thy second state sublime, 234.

If I were loved, as I desire to be, 32.

If one should bring me this report, 222.

If Sleep and Death be truly one, 230.

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born, 231.

I had a vision when the night was late, 148.

I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,
280.

I hear the noise about thy keel, 220.

I held it truth, with him who sings, 218.

I knew an old wife lean and poor, 81.

I know her by her angry air, 29.

I know that this was Life, — the track, 225.

I leave thy praises unexpress'd, 238.

Illyrian woodlands, echoing falls, 153.

I'm glad I walk'd. How fresh the meadows
look, 100.

In her ear he whispers gally, 143.

In love, if love be love, if love be ours, 475.

In those sad words I took farewell, 234.

I past beside the reverend walls, 242.

I read, before my eyelids dropt their shade, 69.

I see the wealthy miller yet, 44.

I send you here a sort of allegory, 54.

I shall not see thee. Dare I say, 245.

I sing to him that rests below, 224.

Is it, then, regret for buried time, 253.

Is it the wind of the dawn that I hear in the
pine overhead? 838.

Is it you, that preach'd in the chapel there look-
ing over the sand? 624.

I sometimes hold it half a sin, 219.

I stood on a tower in the wet, 947.

I stood upon the Mountain which o'erlooks, 925.

I' the glooming light, 930.

It is the day when he was born, 251.

It is the miller's daughter, 47.

It little profits that an idle king, 117.

I trust I have not wasted breath, 254.

It was the time when lilies blow, 141.

I vex my heart with fancies dim, 230.

I wage not any feud with Death, 240.

I waited for the train at Coventry, 126.

I was the chief of the race — he had stricken my
father dead, 607.

I will not shut me from my kind, 251.

I wish I were as in the years of old, 618.

King Arthur made new knights to fill the gap,
529.

King, that hast reign'd six hundred years, and
grown, 616.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere, 60.

Late, my grandson! half the morning have I
paced these sandy tracts, 649.

Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!
557.

Leodogran, the King of Camelard, 388.

Life and Thought have gone away, 19.

Like souls that balance joy and pain, 146.

Live thy Life, 694.

Lo, as a dove when up she springs, 221.

Long as the heart beats life within her breast,
947.

Long lines of cliff breaking have left a chasm,
293.

Lo! there once more — this is the seventh night!
773.

Love is and was my lord and king, 256.

Love is come with a song and a smile, 778.

Love that hath us in the net, 47.

Love thou thy land, with love far-brought, 79.

Low-flowing breezes are roaming the broad val-
ley dimm'd in the gloaming, 4.

Lucilla, wedded to Lucretius, found, 351.

Many a hearth upon our dark globe sighs after
many a vanish'd face, 667.

Many, many welcomes, 695.

Mellow moon of heaven, 669.

Me my own fate to lasting sorrow doometh, 943.

Midnight — in no midsummer tune, 645.

Milk for my sweet-arts, Bess! fur it can be the
time about now, 637.

Mine be the strength of spirit, full and free, 30.

Minnie and Winnie, 348.

Moon on the field and the foam, 886.

'More than my brothers are to me,' 239.

Move eastward, happy earth, and leave, 146.
My father left a park to me, 133.
My friend should meet me somewhere hereabout,
599.
My good blade carves the casques of men, 136.
My heart is wated with my woe, 21.
My hope and heart is with thee—thou wilt be,
30.
My life is full of weary days, 29.
My Lords, we heard you speak: you told us all,
345.
My love has talk'd with rocks and trees, 247.
My name, once mine, now thine, is closelier mine,
476.
My own dim life should teach me this, 227.
My Rosalind, my Rosalind, 26.
My Rosalind, my Rosalind, 940.
Mystery of mysteries, 24.

Naiy, no! mander o' use to be callin' 'im Roß,
Roß, Roß, 664.
Nature, so far as in her lies, 78.
Nightingales warbled without, 347.
Not here! the white North has thy bones; and
thou, 616.
Not he that breaks the dams, but he, 947.
Not this way will you set your name, 641.
Now fades the last long streak of snow, 253.
Now is done thy long day's work, 20.
Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white,
210.
Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut, 224.

O beauty, passing beauty! sweetest Sweet, 939.
O blackbird! sing me something well, 75.
O bridesmaid, ere the happy knot was tied, 32.
O darling room, my heart's delight, 941.
O days and hours, your work is this, 254.
O diviner air, 587.
Of love that never found his earthly close, 114.
Of old sat Freedom on the heights, 79.
O God! my God! have mercy now, 5.
O go not yet, my love! 931.
O happy lark, that warblest high, 917.
O Lady Flora, let me speak, 128.
Old Fitz, who from your suburb grange, 617.
Old poets foster'd under friendlier skies, 648.
Old warder of these buried bones, 229.
Old yew, which graspest at the stones, 218.
O living will that shalt endure, 257.
O Love, Love, Love! O withering night! 48.
O love, what hours were thine and mine, 286.
O loyal to the royal in thyself, 575.
O maiden, fresher than the first green leaf, 934.
O man, forgive thy mortal foe, 915.
O me, my pleasant rambles by the lake, 102.
O mighty-mouth'd inventor of harmonies, 344.
O morning star that smildest in the blue, 416.
O mother Ida, many fountain'd Ida, 48.
Once in a golden hour, 340.
Once more the gate behind me falls, 109.
Once more the Heavenly Power, 644.
On either side the river lie, 33.
One writes, that 'other friends remain,' 219.
On that last night before we went, 249.
O Patriot Statesman, be thou wise to know, 646.
O plump head-waiter at The Cook, 137.
O purblind race of miserable men, 439.
O sad No More! O sweet No More! 942.
O sorrow, cruel fellowship, 218.
O sorrow, wilt thou live with me, 234.
O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying south, 180.
O sweet pale Margaret, 26.
O thou so fair in summers gone, 647.

O thou that after toil and storm, 227.
O thou that sendest out the man, 81.
O thou whose fringed lids I gaze upon, 934.
O true and tried, so well and long, 257.
Our birches yellowing and from each, 639
Our doctor had call'd in another, I never had
seen him before, 595.
Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: the seed,
200.
'Ouse-keeper sent tha, my laas, fur new Squire
coom'd last night, 592.
Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep, 610.
Over! the sweet summer closes, 819.
O, wast thou with me, dearest, then, 255.
O, well for him whose will is strong! 288.
O, yet we trust that somehow good, 233.
O you chorus of indolent reviewers, 345.
O young Mariner, 687.
O you that were eyes and light to the King till
he past away, 616.

Peace; come away: the song of woe, 233.
Pellam the king, who held and lost with Lot,
457.
Pine, beech and plane, oak, walnut, apricot,
884.

Queen Guinevere had fled the court, and sat,
553.

Rainbow, stay, 649.
Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in the sky, 396.
Revered, beloved—O you that hold, 1.
Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky, 251.
Rise, Britons, rise, if manhood be not dead,
945.
Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again, 237.
Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again, 248.
Roman Virgil, thou that singest Ilion's lofty tem-
ples robed in fire, 642.
Rose, on this terrace fifty years ago, 693.
Row us out from Desenzano, to your Sirmione
row, 645.

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun, 254.
Sainted Juliet! dearest name! 930.
Sea-kings' daughter from over the sea, 334.
Shall the hag Evil die with child of Good, 935.
Shame upon you, Robin, 739.
Sir Walter Vivian all a summer's day, 154.
Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance, 236.
Slow sail'd the weary mariners and saw, 18.
Slow sail'd the weary mariners, and saw, 937.
So all day long the noise of battle roll'd, 84.
'So careful of the type?' but no, 233.
So Hector spake; the Trojans roar'd applause,
345.
So many worlds, so much to do, 238.
So, my lord, the Lady Giovanna, 873.
So saying, light-foot Iris pass'd away, 614.
So then our good Archbishop Theobald, 816.
'Spring-flowers!' While you still delay to take
583.
Stand back, keep a clear lane, 696.
Steersman, be not precipitate in thy act, 947.
Still on the tower stood the vane, 148.
Still onward winds the dreary way, 226.
Strong Son of God, immortal Love, 217.
'Summer is coming, summer is coming,' 693.
Sunset and evening star, 924.
Sure never yet was antelope, 943.
Sweet after showers, ambrosial air, 242.
Sweet and low, sweet and low, 171.
Sweet Emma Moreland of yonder town, 136.

- Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in vain, 506.
 Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt, 235.
- Take wings of fancy, and ascend, 238.
 Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean, 179.
 Tears of the widower, when he sees, 222.
 That each, who seems a separate whole, 231.
 That story which the bold Sir Bedivere, 567.
 That which we dare invoke to bless, 256.
 The baby new to earth and sky, 231.
 The brave Geraint, a knight of Arthur's court, 423.
 'The Bull, the Fleece are cramm'd, and not a room,' 99.
 The charge of the gallant three hundred, the Heavy Brigade! 640.
 The churl in spirit, up or down, 252.
 The Danube to the Severn gave, 223.
 The fire of heaven has kill'd the barren cold, 464.
 The form, the form alone is eloquent! 31.
 The ground-flame of the crocus breaks the mould, 694.
 The last tall son of Lot and Bellicent, 398.
 The lesser griefs that may be said, 223.
 The lights and shadows fly! 357.
 The lintwhite and the throatscock, 930.
 The Lord let the house of a brute to the soul of a man, 691.
 The love that rose on stronger wings, 257.
 The North-wind fall'n, in the new-starr'd night, 939.
 The pallid thunder-stricken sigh for gain, 935.
 The path by which we twain did go, 224.
 The plain was grassy, wild and bare, 20.
 The poet in a golden clime was born, 17.
 The rain had fallen, the Poet awoke, 153.
 There are three things which fill my heart with sighs, 943.
 Therefore your Halls, your ancient Colleges, 942.
 There is a sound of thunder afar! 946.
 There is no land like England, 937.
 There is sweet music here that softer falls, 66.
 There lies a vale in Ida, lovelier, 43.
 There rolls the deep where grew the tree, 255.
 These lame hexameters the strong-wing'd music of Homer! 344.
 These to His Memory — since he held them dear, 387.
 The Son of him with whom we strove for power, 346.
 The splendor falls on castle walls, 178.
 The sun, the moon, the stars, the seas, the hills and the plains, 350.
 The time draws near the birth of Christ, 226.
 The time draws near the birth of Christ, 250.
 The town lay still in the low sunlight, 900.
 The varied earth, the moving heaven, 933.
 The voice and the Peak, 350.
 The winds, as at their hour of birth, 7.
 The wind that beats the mountain blows, 77.
 The wish, that of the living whole, 233.
 The woods decay, the woods decay and fall, 118.
 They have left the doors ajar; and by their clash, 568.
 They rose to where their sovran eagle sails, 612.
 This morning is the morning of the day, 90.
 This truth came borne with bier and pall, 241.
 Tho' if an eye that's downward cast, 234.
 Those that of late had fled far and fast, 611.
 Tho' truths in manhood darkly join, 228.
 Thou art not steep'd in golden languors, 10.
- Thou comest, much wept for; such a breeze, 223.
 Thou, from the first, unborn, undying Love, 935.
 Though night hath climbed her peak of highest noon, 935.
 Thou third great Canning, stand among our best, 646.
 Thou who steal'st fire, 14.
 Thy converse drew us with delight, 252.
 Thy dark eyes open'd not, 27.
 Thy prayer was Light — more Light — while Time shall last, 646.
 Thy spirit ere our fatal loss, 230.
 Thy twilights are lull'd, I wot, 11.
 Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums, 189.
 Thy voice is on the rolling air, 257.
 'T is held that sorrow makes us wise, 252.
 'T is well; 't is something; we may stand, 223.
 To-night the winds begin to rise, 222.
 To-night ungather'd let us leave, 250.
 To Sleep I give my powers away, 219.
 Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel, and lower the proud, 430.
 Two bees within a crystal flowerbell rock'd, 937.
 Two children in two neighbor villages, 23.
 Two Suns of Love make day of human life, 648.
 Two young lovers in winter weather, 795.
- Ulysses, much-experienced man, 682.
 Unwatch'd, the garden bough shall sway, 248.
 Uplift a thousand voices full and sweet, 333.
 Urania speaks with darken'd brow, 228.
- Vex not thou the poet's mind, 18.
 Victor in Drama, Victor in Romance, 612.
 Voice of the summer wind, 932.
- Wait till our Sally comes in, fur thou mun a' sights to tell, 582.
 Wailing, wailing, wailing, the wind over land and sea, 579.
 'Wait a little,' you say, 'you are sure it'll all come right,' 577.
 Wan Sculptor, weepst thou to take the cast, 31.
 Warrior of God, man's friend, and tyrant's foe, 646.
 Warrior of God, whose strong right arm debased, 30.
 We know him, out of Shakespeare's art, 944.
 Welcome, welcome with one voice! 657.
 We leave the well-beloved place, 248.
 We left behind the painted buoy, 144.
 Well, you shall have that song that Leonard wrote, 115.
 We lost you for how long a time, 948.
 We move, the wheel must always move, 692.
 We ranging down this lower track, 231.
 We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move, 116.
 We were two daughters of one race, 53.
 What be those crown'd forms high over the sacred fountain? 691.
 What did ye do, and what did ye say, 910.
 What does little birdie say, 333.
 Whatever I have said or sung, 256.
 What hope is here for modern rhyme, 239.
 What sight so lured him thro' the fields he knew, 692.
 What time I wasted youthful hours, 944.
 What time the mighty moon was gathering light, 21.
 What words are these have fallen from me? 222.

Where 'asta bein saw long and mek' liggin' 'ere
aloan ? 337.
When cats run home and light is come, 11.
When I contemplate all alone, 240.
When in the down I sink my head, 236.
When Lazarus left his charnel-cave, 227.
When on my bed the moonlight falls, 235.
When rosy plumelets tuft the larch, 245.
When the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free, 11.
When will the stream be aweary of flowing, 4.
Where Claribel low-lieth, 3.
Where is the Giant of the Sun, which stood, 942.
While about the shore of Mona those Neronian
legionaries, 342.
While man and woman still are incomplete, 693.
'Whither, O whither, love, shall we go,' 342.
Who can say, 941.
Who fears to die ? Who fears to die ? 936.
Who loves not Knowledge ? Who shall rail, 253.
Who would be a merman bold, 23.
Who would be a mermaid fair, 24.
Why wail you, pretty plover ? and what is it that
you fear ? 679.
Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet, 243.
Witch-elms that counterchange the floor, 244.

With a half-glance upon the sky, 16.
With blackest moss the flower-plots, 8.
With farmer Allan at the farm abode, 95.
With one black shadow at its feet, 36.
With roses musky-breathed, 942.
With such compelling cause to grieve, 226.
With trembling fingers did we weave, 226.
With weary steps I loiter on, 220.

Yet if some voice that man could trust, 228.
Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven, 235.
You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease, 79.
You cast to ground the hope which once was
mine, 933.
You did late review my lays, 941.
You leave us : you will see the Rhine, 247.
You make our faults too gross, and thence main-
tain, 693.
You might have won the Poet's name, 151.
You must wake and call me early, call me early
mother dear, 61.
Your ringlets, your ringlets, 946.
You say, but with no touch of scorn, 246.
You thought my heart too far diseased, 235.
You, you, if you shall fail to understand, 657.

INDEX OF TITLES

- Achilles over the Trench, 614.
 Additional Verses to 'God Save the Queen,' 946.
 Adeline, 24.
 Alexander, 30.
 Alexandra, A Welcome to, 334.
 Alexandrovna, Her Royal Highness Marie, Duchess of Edinburgh, A Welcome to, 346.
 Alice, Princess, Dedication Poem to, 596.
 All things will die, 4.
 Amphion, 133.
 Anacreontics, 942.
 Ancient Sage, The, 628.
 Argyll, Duke of, To the, 646.
 Audley Court, 99.
 Aymer's Field, 312.

 Balin and Balan, 457.
 Ballad of Oriana, The, 21.
 BALLADS, AND OTHER POEMS, 577.
 Battle of Brunanburh, 613.
 Beatrice, H. R. H. Princess, To, 648.
 Beautiful City, 693.
 BECKET, 815.
 Beggar Maid, The, 147.
 Blackbird, The, 75.
 Boklodea, 342.
 Boyle, Mary, To, 683.
 'Break, Break, Break,' 153.
 Bridesmaid, The, 32.
 Britons, Guard Your Own, 945.
 Brook, The, 281.
 Brookfield, Rev. W. H., To the, 611.
 Buonaparte, 30.
 Burial of Love, The, 929.
 By an Evolutionist, 691.

 Cambridge University, On, 942.
 Captain, The, 142.
 'Caress'd or chidden by the slender hand,' 31.
 Caxton, Epitaph on, 646.
 Character, A, 16.
 Charge of the Heavy Brigade at Balaclava, The, 640.
 Charge of the Light Brigade, The, 292.
 'Check every outlash, every ruder sally,' 943.
 Child Songs, 347.
 Choric Song, 86.
 Chorus in an Unpublished Drama, 933.
 Circumstance, 23.
 City Child, The, 347.
 Claribel, 3.
 Columbus, 603.
 'Come not, when I am dead,' 147.
 Coming of Arthur, The, 388.
 Compromise, 947.
 'Could I outwear my present state of woe,' 934.
 Crossing the Bar, 924.
 Cur, Tam, 884.

 Daisy, The, 286.
 Dante, To, 616.
 Day-Dream, The, 128.
 Dead Prophet, The, 643.
 Death of the Old Year, The, 76.
 Dedication, A, 342.

 Dedication (Idylls of the King), 327.
 Dedication Poem to the Princess Alice, 596.
 Defence of Lucknow, The, 597.
 DEMETER AND OTHER POEMS, 659.
 Demeter and Persephone, 661.
 De Profundis, 610.
 Deserted House, The, 19.
 Despair, 624.
 Dirge, A, 20.
 Dora, 95.
 Dream of Fair Women, A, 69.
 Dualisms, 837.
 Dufferin and Ava, Marquis of, To the, 659.
 Dying Swan, The, 20.

 Eagle, The, 146.
 Early Sonnets, 29.
 Early Spring, 644.
 Edward Gray, 135.
 Edwin Morris, or, The Lake, 102.
 1865-1866, 947.
 Eleinore, 27.
 E. L. on his Travels in Greece, To, 153.
 England and America in 1782, 81.
 ENGLISH IDYLS AND OTHER POEMS, 83.
 English War-Song, 936.
 ENOCH ARDEN AND OTHER POEMS, 293.
 Enoch Arden, 293.
 Epic, The, 83.
 Epitaph on Caxton, 646.
 Epitaph on General Gordon, 646.
 Epitaph on Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, 646.
 Experiments, 342.
 Experiments in Sapphic Metre, 948.

 FALCON, THE, 873.
 Farewell, A, 146.
 Far — far — away, 692.
 Fatima, 47.
 First Quarrel, The, 577.
 Fitzgerald, E., To, 617.
 Fleet, The, 657.
 Flight, The, 632.
 Flower, The, 340.
 'Flower in the crannied wall,' 351.
 Forlorn, 678.
 Fragment, A, 942.
 Franklin, Sir John, 616.
 'Frater Ave Atque Vale,' 645.
 Frederica, Princess, on Her Marriage, To, 616.
 Freedom, 647.

 Gardner's Daughter, The; or, The Pictures, 90.
 Gareth and Lynette, 398.
 Geraint and Enid, 439.
 Godiva, 126.
 'God Save the Queen,' Additional verses to, 946.
 Golden Year, The, 115.
 Goose, The, 81.
 Gordon, General, Epitaph on, 646.
 Grandmother, The, 334.
 Grasshopper, The, 932.
 Guinevere, 553.

Hamley, General, Prologue to, 639.

Hands All Round, 646.

Happy, 679.

HAROLD: A DRAMA, 773.

Helen's Tower, 646.

Hero to Leander, 931.

Hesperides, The, 939.

Higher Pantheism, The, 350.

Holy Grail, The, 613.

Homer, On Translations of, 344.

'How' and the 'Why,' The, 929.

Hugo, Victor, To, 612.

Human Cry, The, 611.

IDYLLS OF THE KING, 387.

'If I were loved, as I desire to be,' 32.

IN MEMORIAM A. H. H., 217.

In Memoriam W. G. Ward, 694.

In Quantity, 344.

In the Children's Hospital: Emmie, 595.

In the Garden at Swainston, 347.

In the Valley of Caunteretz, 340.

Isabel, 8.

Islet, The, 342.

Jebb, Professor, To, 661.

J. M. K., To, 30.

J. S., To, 77.

Jubilee of Queen Victoria, On the, 660.

JUVENILIA, 3.

Kate, 29.

Kraken, The, 7.

Lady Clara Vere de Vere, 60.

Lady Clare, 141.

LADY OF SHALOTT, THE, AND OTHER POEMS, 33.

Lady of Shalott, The, 33.

Lady Sleeping, To a, 934.

Lancelot and Elaine, 487.

Last Tournament, The, 540.

Leonine Elegiacs, 4.

Letters, The, 148.

Lillian, 7.

Lines ('Long as the heart beats life within her breast'), 947.

Lines ('Here often, when a child I lay reclined'), 944.

Literary Squabbles, 348.

Locksley Hall, 120.

LOCKSLEY HALL SIXTY YEARS AFTER, ETC., 649.

Locksley Hall Sixty Years After, 649.

Lord of Burleigh, The, 143.

Lost Hope, 933.

Lotos-Eaters, The, 66.

Love, 935.

Love and Death, 21.

Love and Duty, 114.

Love and Sorrow, 934.

Love, Pride, and Forgetfulness, 933.

LOVER'S TALE, THE, 361.

'Love thou thy land, with love far-brought,' 79.

Lucretius, 361.

Macready, W. C., To, 658.

Madeline, 10.

Margaret, 26.

Mariana, 8.

Mariana in the South, 35.

Marriage of Geraint, The, 423.

MAUD, AND OTHER POEMS, 260.

Maud: A Monodrama, 260.

Maurice, F. D., To the Rev., 287.

May Queen, The, 61.

Memory, Ode to, 14.

'Me my own fate to lasting sorrow doometh,' 943.

Merlin and the Glean, 687.

Merlin and Vivien, 468.

Mermaid, The, 24.

Merman, The, 23.

Miller's Daughter, The, 44.

Milton, 344.

'Mine be the strength of spirit, full and free,' 30.

Minnie and Winnie, 348.

Montenegro, 612.

Morte d'Arthur, 84.

Mourner, On a, 78.

'Move eastward, happy earth, and leave,' 146.

'My life is full of weary days,' 29.

Mystic, The, 932.

National Song, 937.

New Timon and the Poets, The, 944.

No More, 942.

North, Christopher, To, 941.

Northern Cobbler, The, 582.

Northern Farmer, New Style, 339.

Northern Farmer, Old Style, 337.

Nothing will Die, 4.

Oak, The, 694.

'O beauty, passing beauty! sweetest Sweet!' 939.

O Darling Room, 941.

Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington, 288.

Ode sung at the Opening of the International Exhibition, 333.

Ode to Memory, 14.

Enone, 48.

'Of old sat Freedom on the heights,' 79.

Oi pévres, 938.

Oldcastle, Sir John, Lord Cobham, 599.

On a Mourner, 78.

On Cambridge University, 942.

One who ran down the English, To, 693.

On One who affected an Effeminate Manner, 693.

On the Jubilee of Queen Victoria, 660.

On Translations of Homer, 344.

Opening of the Indian and Colonial Exhibition by the Queen, 657.

Owl, The — Song, 11.

Owl, The — Second Song, 11.

Owd Roß, 664.

'O you chorus of indolent reviewers,' 345.

Palace of Art, The, 64.

Parnassus, 691.

Passing of Arthur, The, 567.

Pellens and Ettarre, 529.

Play, The, 693.

Poet, The, 17.

Poets and their Bibliographies, 648.

Poet's Mind, The, 18.

Poet's Song, The, 163.

Poland, 31.

Politics, 692.

Prefatory Poem to my Brother's Sonnets, 645.

Prefatory Sonnet to 'The Nineteenth Century,' 611.

PRINCESS, THE: A MEDLEY, 154.

Princess Alice, Dedicatory Poem to, 506.

Progress of Spring, The, 684.

Prologue to General Hamley, 639.

PROMISE OF MAY, THE, 900.

Queen, To the, 1.
Queen, To the, 575.

QUEEN MARY: A DRAMA, 695.

Recollections of the Arabian Nights, 11.
Requiescent, 341.
Revenge, The; a Ballad of the Fleet, 584.
Ring, The, 609.
Ringlet, The, 946.
Rizpah, 579.
Romney's Remorse, 688.
Rosalind, 26.
Rosalind, 940.
Roses on the Terrace, The, 693.

Sailor Boy, The, 341.
Saint Agnes' Eve, 134.
Saint Simeon Stylites, 105.
Sea-Fairies, The, 18.
Sea Fairies, The, 937.
Sea Dreams, 327.
'Shall the hag Evil die with child of Good,' 935.
Show-Day at Battle Abbey, 1876, 772.
Sir Galahad, 136.
Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere, 146.
Sisters, The, 53.
Sisters, The, 586.
Skipping-Rope, The, 943.
Snowdrop, The, 693.

Songs:

'A spirit haunts the year's last hours,' 16.
'Beat upon mine, little heart,' 690.
Choric, 66.
'Every day hath its night,' 931.
Far — far — away, 692.
'I come from haunts of coot and hern, 282.
Included in the dramas:
'Artemis, Artemis, hear us, O Mother,' 893.
'Babble in bower,' 847.
'Dead mountain flowers,' 878.
'Gee oop! who! Gee oop! who!,' 911.
'Hapless doom of women happy in betrothing!,' 763.
'His friends would praise him, I believe 'em,' 711.
'Is it the wind of the dawn that I hear in the pine overhead?' 838.
'Love is come with a song and a smile,' 778.
'Moon on the field and the foam,' 886.
'O happy lark, that warblest high,' 917.
'O man, forgive thy mortal foe,' 915.
'Over! the sweet summer closes,' 819.
'Rainbow, stay,' 849.
'Shame upon you, Robin,' 739.
'The town lay still in the low sunlight,' 900.
'Two young lovers in winter weather,' 795.
'What did ye do, and what did ye say,' 910.

Included in the Idylls of the King:

'A rose, but one, none other rose had I,' 536.
'Ay, ay, O, ay — the winds that bend the brier!,' 563.
'Blow trumpet, for the world is white with May,' 397.
'Free love — free field — we love but while we may,' 545.
'In love, if love be love, if love be ours,' 475.
'Late, late, so late! and dark the night and chill!,' 557.
'My name, once mine, now thine, is closer mine,' 476.
'O morning star that smildest in the blue,' 416.

'Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in the sky,' 396.
'Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in vain,' 506.
'The fire of heaven has kill'd the barren cold,' 464.
'Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel, and lower the proud,' 430.
Included in The Princess:
'Ask me no more: the moon may draw the sea,' 206.
'As thro' the land at eve we went,' 163.
'Home they brought her warrior dead,' 199.
'Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white,' 210.
'O Swallow, Swallow, flying, flying south,' 180.
'Our enemies have fallen, have fallen: the seed,' 200.
'Sweet and low,' 171.
'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,' 179.
'The splendor falls on castle walls,' 178.
'Thy voice is heard thro' rolling drums,' 189.

'I' the glooming light,' 930.
'It is the miller's daughter,' 47.
'Love that hath us in the net,' 47.
'Mellow moon of heaven,' 669.
National, 937.
'O diviner Air,' 587.
'O mother Ida, many-fountain'd Ida,' 48.
'The lintwhite and the throblecock,' 930.
'The winds, as at their hour of birth,' 7.
'We sleep and wake and sleep, but all things move,' 116.
'What does little birdie say,' 333.
'Who can say,' 941.

Sonnets:

Alexander, 30.
Bridesmaid, The, 32.
Buonaparte, 30.
'Caress'd or chidden by the slender hand,' 31.
'Check every outflash, every ruder sally,' 943.
'Could I outwear my present state of woe,' 934.
'If I were loved, as I desire to be,' 32.
'Me my own fate to lasting sorrow doometh,' 943.
'Mine be the strength of spirit, full and free,' 30.
Montenegro, 612.
'O beauty, passing beauty! sweetest Sweet!,' 939.
Poland, 31.
'Shall the hag Evil die with child of Good,' 935.
'The form, the form alone is eloquent!,' 31.
'The pallid thunder-stricken sigh for gain,' 935.
'There are three things which fill my heart with sighs,' 943.
'Though Night hath climbed her peak of highest noon,' 935.
To —, 29.
To J. M. K., 30.
To 'The Nineteenth Century,' Prefatory, 611.
To the Rev. W. H. Brookfield, 611.
To Victor Hugo, 612.
To W. C. Macready, 658.
'Wan Sulptor, weepst thou to take the cast,' 31.
Written on hearing of the Outbreak of the Polish Insurrection, 941.

- Specimen of a Translation of the Iliad in Blank Verse, 345.
 Spinster's Sweet-Arts, The, 637.
 Spiteful Letter, The, 348.
 Stanza ('Not he that breaks the dams, but he'), 947.
 Stanza ('We lost you for how long a time'), 948.
 Stanzas ('Come not, when I am dead'), 147.
 Stanzas ('What time I wasted youthful hours'), 944.
 Stratford de Redcliffe, Lord, Epitaph on, 646.
 Supposed Confessions of a Second-rate Sensitive Mind, 5.
 Talking Oak, The, 109.
 Tears of Heaven, The, 934.
 Tennyson, Alfred, my Grandson, To, 577.
 'The form, the form alone is eloquent!', 31.
 'The pallid thunder-stricken sigh for gain,' 935.
 'There are three things which fill my heart with sighs,' 943.
 Third of February, 1852, The, 345.
 'Though Night hath climbed her peak of highest noon,' 935.
 Three Sonnets to a Coquette, 31.
 Throstle, The, 693.
 Timbuctoo, 925.
 TIRESIAS, AND OTHER POEMS, 617.
 Tiresias, 618.
 Tithonus, 118.
 To —, ('Clear-headed friend,') 10.
 To —, ('As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood,') 21.
 To —, ('I send you here a sort of allegory,') 64.
 To —, ('Sainted Juliet! dearest name!') 930.
 To —, after reading a Life and Letters, 151.
 To a Lady Sleeping, 934.
 To Alfred Tennyson, my Grandson, 577.
 To Christopher North, 941.
 To Dante, 616.
 To E. Fitzgerald, 617.
 To E. L. on his Travels in Greece, 153.
 To H. R. H. Princess Beatrice, 648.
 To J. M. K., 30.
 To J. S., 77.
 To Mary Boyle, 683.
 To-morrow, 634.
 To One who ran down the English, 693.
 To Princess Frederica on Her Marriage, 616.
 To Professor Jebb, 661.
 To the Duke of Argyll, 646.
 To the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, 659.
 To the Queen, 1.
 To the Queen, 575.
 To the Rev. F. D. Maurice, 287.
 To the Rev. W. H. Brookfield, 611.
 To Ulysses, 682.
 To Victor Hugo, 612.
 To Virgil, 642.
 To W. C. Macready, 658.
 Translations of Homer, On, 344.
 Two Greetings, The, 610.
 Two Voices, The, 37.
 Ulysses, 117.
 Ulysses, To, 682.
 Vastness, 667.
 Victim, The, 348.
 Victoria, Queen, On the Jubilee of, 600.
 Village Wife, The; or, The Entail, 592.
 Virgil, To, 642.
 Vision of Sin, The, 148.
 Voice and the Peak, The, 350.
 Voyage, The, 144.
 Voyage of Maeldune, The, 607.
 Wages, 349.
 Walking to the Mail, 100.
 'Wan Sculptor, weepst thou to take the cast,' 31.
 Ward, W. G., In Memoriam, 694.
 War, The, 946.
 Welcome to Alexandra, A, 334.
 Welcome to Her Royal Highness, Marie Alexandrovna, Duchess of Edinburgh, A, 346.
 Wellington, Duke of, Ode on the Death of the, 288.
 Will, 288.
 Will Waterproof's Lyrical Monologue, 137.
 WINDOW, THE; OR, THE SONG OF THE WEAVER, 357.
 Wreck, The, 621.
 'You ask me, why, tho' ill at ease,' 79.

